Advaita and Neoplatonism

A Critical Study in Comparative Philosophy

J.F. Staal

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Foreword

This is a study in comparative philosophy. The systems selected for comparison are Advaita and Neoplatonism. The author of this work, Dr. J.F. Staal, came from Holland as a Government of India scholar in 1954 and worked in the University Department of Philosophy for three years, registering himself as a candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The present publication constitutes the thesis which he wrote in part fulfilment of the conditions for the degree which was awarded to him.

The present study does not conform to the usual type of comparative philosophy which contents itself with comparing two or more systems as object-philosophies. Dr. Staal, as a Westerner, approaches Advaita through a comparable tradition in the West - the tradition of impersonalism - which is to be found in Neoplatonism. And, his approach, further still, is from the standpoint of existentialism *cum* phenomenology which is a dominant contemporary trend in that part of Europe whence he hails. The experience he gained in British and American Universities subsequent to his stay in India, he says, has somewhat changed his perspective. The pages of this work will speak eloquently to the great change which India has evidently made in his outlook.

The treatment of the metaphysics of Advaita from the phenomenological standpoint attempted here is quite interesting. It does not follow the usual sequence of topics that is almost the rule in the Advaita classics. Dr. Staal avoids what he regards as the epistemological bias of later Advaita. Although references to post-Śaṅkara writings are not absent, the main sources on which this study relies are the works of Śaṅkara. After sketching

the principal doctrines of Advaita, Dr. Staal turns to a comparison of these with the teachings of Plotinus and his followers. Here, what he does is to select only such topics as would be helpful in an understanding of Śaṅkara's Advaita. This is a justifiable procedure because the author's principal aim is, as he observes, to study Advaita. While the similarities between the two systems are pointed out, their dissimilarities are also discussed. Dr. Staal shows that these differences result from the different traditions from which Advaita and Neoplatonism arose and to which they belong, respectively. Regarding the question of the possible influence of Indian thought on Neoplatonism, Dr. Staal contents himself with appending a note summarising the discussions of other scholars.

It is regretted that there are several printing mistakes. A list of corrections of the major ones is added at the end.

Madras, December 15, 1961

T.M.P. MAHADEVAN

Preface

There are several kinds of books that could be written about a philosophy which has developed in a culture different from one's own. One book might let the texts speak for themselves. Another might look for answers to questions in which the author is interested. The present book finds neither approach entirely satisfactory. Misunderstandings occur despite extensive knowledge and in spite of sound philosophic outlook. These arise because categories within which philosophies operate can be basically different from each other. Therefore the main difficulty lies in understanding unfamiliar categories and this may call for a re-orientation. The information required can be gathered neither from texts alone, nor from one's own philosophic background. It should be obtained by constantly checking the concepts met against solutions that appear natural in one's own tradition. Such a study is philosophic for it tends to increase the awareness of one's own background and draws attention to other frameworks of thought. In addition basic misunderstandings which often appear in the course of study are avoided from the beginning.

Advaita is studied here in this spirit. While a textual study presupposes little more than a sound philological basis, a philosophic study can only be made from a particular philosophical point of view. Advaita will be studied from the point of view of contemporary Western philosophy, with some emphasis on existentialism and phenomenology. Such an undertaking unavoidably constitutes a kind of comparative philosophy. The first part deals with philosophical implications of a comparative study of Advaita. It leads to general considerations of method but also meets with unexpected problems. Western philosophy reacts in a characteristic way to the problems of Advaita, so that Advaita is first studied as an aspect of Western thought. This is possible because the Neoplatonic tradition provides a relatively appropriate framework of categories. In Western philosophy Advaita is therefore naturally regarded as a kind of Neoplatonism.

The second part applies the results of the first to Advaita itself. Principally it aims to analyse the assumptions which are made in Advaita explicitly as well as implicitly. It turns out that the results of an analysis using modern philosophical tools are sometimes different from those provided by a traditional philological analysis, though both are of course compatible.

The third part makes a comparative study of Advaita and Neoplatonism. Since there are similarities as well as dissimilarities the issue arises as to which are the more significant. This can be decided only by evaluation in the light of philosophic assumptions, so that once again the role played by the observer has to be examined.

An Appendix discusses evidence for the historical influence of Indian thought on Neoplatonism.

This book was first submitted as a thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Madras in 1957. After four years I find myself in basic agreement with most of my views. Though I should have preferred a different presentation I have only made minor corrections, mainly affecting style and bibliography. Had I opportunity to re-write the book I would take more for granted and be less concerned with the phenomenological and existentialist phases in contemporary Western philosophy. I should spend less time on the methods by means of which results are reached and more time on the results themselves. This might have produced a more readable book. But as the assumptions which I now take for granted still constitute unsolved problems, the new book might have been more accessible but less useful. There may be no easier road than the long way I painstakingly travelled.

As for phenomenology and existentialism, the years I spent in British and American Universities have somewhat changed my perspective. Although I have continued to observe that the English speaking countries (including India) and the continental European countries appear to compete in neglecting each other's philosophies, I no longer regard existentialism and phenomenology as the only true heirs to classical Western philosophy. One major conviction, implicit in the thesis, has gradually grown stronger: a serious study of Indian systems of thought might well help to overcome the impasses reached in the mutually exclusive schools of contemporary Western philosophy.

The pleasant task remains to thank those persons and institutions that have assisted me in many different ways. I am deeply indebted to the Governments of India and of the Netherlands. Both (the former through its Reciprocal Scholarships Scheme) enabled me to live and study in India for three years. I hope that this book will give some idea of my Indian experiences, which have been a constant source of inspiration ever since.

I am greatly indebted to the University of Madras for having permitted me to work in the University and to submit the thesis upon which the present work is based.

My gratitude goes in the first place to my teacher and guide, Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan, Professor of Philosophy and Head of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Madras. He helped me in every conceivable way. He not only taught me the doctrines of Advaita, but showed me by his example how an Advaitin thinks and lives.

It is a pleasant duty to acknowledge my debt to Dr. V. Raghavan, Professor of Sanskrit and Head of the Department of Sanskrit of the University of Madras, whom I often approached with questions and who always supplied me immediately and unhesitatingly with a wealth of information and references.

I should also like to thank Mr. S. Sankarasubrahmanya Ayyar, B.A., of the Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, Mylapore, who with great enthusiasm and perseverance acquainted me both with the principles of Sanskrit and with the techniques of Pāṇini.

It is a privilege to be able to express my gratitude to His Holiness Abhinava Vidyā Tīrtha Svāmigal, present Śaṅkarācārya of the Śṛṅgeri Maṭha, for his kindness and interest in my work. By living in his proximity and by speaking with him I came to understand more than texts could provide.

I should have liked to thank personally my first teacher in philosophy, Dr. H.J. Pos, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Amsterdam. His personal interest in my work and his brilliant expositions of Greek thought from Thales to Plotinus were very much alive in my mind when I received in India the announcement of his unexpected death.

With pleasure I acknowledge my indebtedness to numerous Indian friends, in particular to Miss Sita T. Chari, to the Rev. Dr. R. Panikker and to my wife, who have made valuable observations on earlier versions of this work.

I am very grateful to the University Grants Commission which has contributed to the expenses of the present publication, and to members of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Madras who have assisted me in correcting the proofs.

London-Philadelphia, August, 1961.

J.F. STAAL

Part I
Character and Methodology of Comparative Philosophy - with Special Reference to Advaita and Neoplatonism

1. *Introduction*

A Western student of Advaita cannot approach his subject in the same way as a philosophy which belongs to his own tradition. Nobody is entirely free to think as he wishes, for first reactions are partly determined by a philosophical background. The relation to one's own background determines the direction one should take in order to reach a system of thought like Advaita. So the simplest kind of comparative philosophy comes into being: that between one's own view of one's own philosophic background and the philosophy which is the object of study. Comparative philosophy therefore cannot be avoided when a system like Advaita is studied outside its own tradition.

Comparative philosophy however is not a technique, a tool, of which the origin is irrelevant and which has no history like a machine: it is a phenomenon which originated in Western civilization and it has to be understood as such. Though it came into being with the book of Paul Masson-Oursel, *La philosophie comparée*, in 1923, its manifestation was foreshadowed in various ways and is characteristic of European culture. In order to see what comparative philosophy means and can mean, it becomes desirable to consider its background.

2. *The background of comparative philosophy*

Comparative philosophy has been preceded in Europe by two other fields of comparative studies, comparative linguistics and the comparative study of religions. The relation between these three clarifies much of their respective structures, methods, achievements and aims.

Both disciplines arose mainly out of studies in Indian languages end civilisation, It was mainly the study of Sanskrit as an

Indo-European language which led to comparative linguistics. In this field objective standards enable us to pass judgments which may be universally accepted by scholars as 'objectively true.'

Likewise, the study of a variety of religious developments, partly Indian, led in Europe to the comparative study of religions. Here the material is completely different from that of the preceding case: the contents of a religion represent absolute truth for the adherents, whereas the student of different religions has at the same time either his own religion, or conceptions which he believes to take the place of a religion. In this context the problem of truth arises and two attitudes become possible: (1) the 'phenomenological attitude', which leaves out the question of truth; this is embodied in the 'phenomenology of religion'; (2) what may be called the 'missionary attitude' (though its propounders need not be missionaries, nor have any desire to make propaganda for their own religion), which takes as its starting point the acceptance of the truth of one's own religion. Advantages and disadvantages of both attitudes are obvious: the first method is more reliable and makes a more scientific impression, but it is poor in that it is restricted to the studies of forms and manifestations ('phenomena' in the pre-phenomenological sense) and cannot have access to what is most essential to the religious human being: religious belief, faith, experience or conviction, each with its presumed transforming power. Apart from this, the first method may unconsciously depend upon what is accepted as truth according to one's own religion. The second method is at any rate at the same level as the religion studied, but it is subjective.

In the comparative study of philosophy the complications are greater. Whereas the comparative study of religions has no pretention of being itself a religion, comparative philosophy is, according to the term, philosophy. This makes the subject dependent upon the concept of philosophy, itself one of the major problems of philosophy. If it is denied that the subject is an aspect or part of philosophy, the situation becomes easier, the question of truth can be left out and it seems that a purely descriptive phenomenological method would be sufficient. But, apart from the inevitable danger caused by the influences of unconscious prejudices, a new question arises: what is the significance of comparative philosophy?

Being aware of the fact that an important part of the existing literature of comparative philosophy would accept the above mentioned view, although these questions are generally neither asked, nor answered, we reject it, as it seems that the subject would lose its significance by removal of the truth value. Comparative philosophy would become of no philosophical and of little scholarly interest.

If comparative philosophy is philosophy, the problem of truth arises in all its mysteriousness. The more so as there is an important difference between religious and philosophical concepts of truth. In the former case there was a conviction on the part of the student regarding his own religion, whereas in the case of philosophy there cannot be such a conviction; there can only be open-mindedness and freedom. It will be necessary to study the implications of comparative philosophy regarded as philosophy.

In the special case of Indian thought, there are additional difficulties for here the European definitions and concepts of 'religion' and 'philosophy' are not adequate. According to Indian tradition philosophy and religion are not separate, as they are in European tradition. Therefore two fields of comparative studies have come into being in Europe: comparative philosophy and the comparative study of religions. These two have therefore to colloborate when Indian phenomena are studied. This justifies the above comparison.

3. *Comparative philosophy as philosophy*

When comparative philosophy is studied by Europeans it becomes a twentieth century European phenomenon. As an aspect of philosophy it is not free to choose an arbitrary mode of thought to which it would like to belong. It is by nature connected with modern European philosophy, whether this relation is at the moment manifest or hidden.

The consequences thereof seem to be grave. Should the philosophical problems which play an essential part in comparative philosophy, such as the problem of truth, be determined by modern European philosophy? But this merely means that comparative philosophy is philosophy; that it is not a tool; and that it is not irrelevant who deals with it. It is clear that this leads

to the problem of historicism. Thus it is inevitable that the following pages will contain contemporary European philosophy, as the treatment intends to be philosophical and *absence of explicitness would only mean hidden dependence*. (Lack of knowledge of modern European philosophy on the part of scholars dealing with any subject does not mean that there cannot be any dependence, as philosophy previously shaped and still permeates the cultural tradition in a fundamental though often unnoticed way).

The first philosophical problem of comparative philosophy, determining its actions, its assertions and its judgments, is the problem of truth.

A. Truth in Comparative Philosophy.

The present section falls into five subdivisions. The titles of the first three are taken from a lecture by Karl Jaspers in Frankfurt on August 28, 1947, on the occasion of the Goethe prize being awarded to him. The words give an indication as to the direction of this investigation: 'How can we receive what need to be in art, in poetry, in philosophy - receive it not in dogmatic traditionalism, not in relativistic indifference, not in esthetic irresponsible emotion, but as a claim upon us, affecting all that we are?'.[1]

In dealing with the problem of truth our point of view will depend on considerations concerning the special kind of comparative philosophy dealt with here.

(i) Relativistic indifference. Is faith necessary?

One preconceived view about the truth-nature of philosophical questions is the view that each philosophy is true for the community and period in which it arose, and this is all that can be said about the truth-value. If two solutions of a philosophical problem are contradictory they are nevertheless equally true, because there is no absolute truth to which both could refer or fail to refer and which would be a common measure. The reason is that this, truth would again be the truth according to a special philosophical view. Though this relativistic view seems to be

1 Translated into English by H.E. Fischer in: K. Jaspers, *Existentialism and Humanism*, New York, 1952, 50.

theoretically weak, there is a difficulty regarding actual philosophies, which favours it. Each philosophy arose in a special context and closer study often reveals that the tenets of each are in certain respects best suited to the context. This relativism, therefore, is not so easy to overcome and it will occupy us again.

The personal attitude connected with relativism is generally one of indifference. It might be despair. The former attitude is, in matters of philosophy, undesirable and it should never prevail so long as the case of relativism is not proved. For indifference fails to participate in the seriousness either of conviction or of quest which is inherent in almost all philosophies; it excludes the possibility that the studying subject should ever be personally involved; it has a negative answer in advance and it does not allow for the possibility that new truth can be found. It also ignores the fact that the philosophy studied deals with entities which may be of vital importance to the student, irrespective of philosophical context.

Thus, in the quest for truth in comparative philosophy, the attitude of indifference on the one hand and relativism as a preconceived view and method on the other, are both to be rejected. But the possibility that relativism is true - the unique and only truth in this case - eventually to be reached as a kind of conclusion, may not be initially excluded.

The one certain device against relativistic indifference is faith. If we accept faith, we will reach the truth embodied and presupposed in the act of faith. This is evidently a circle for the outsider, but we are not ready to reject it even when we are not ready to 'jump' into it. For faith may lead to certainty and experience.

The philosophies with which we are to deal have stressed the importance and even the inevitability of faith. That faith (*śraddhā*) has to be accepted as a serious claim especially in Indian thought can be seen from many texts. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* says: 'When one has faith, then one reflects; without faith one does not reflect; one reflects only when one has faith'[2] and the

2 7.19; Cf. also 7.20.

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad: 'In this fire (i.e., heaven) the Gods offer faith'.[3] The *Bhagavad Gītā* says: 'The faith of each is in accordance with his nature, O Bhārata. Man is made up of his faith; as a man's faith is, so is he'.[4] Faith is further given as one of the qualifications needed for those who want to study Advaita: Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtrabhāsya* enjoins[5] as the third requirement for an *adhikāri* the attainment of the means of realisation beginning with peace and restraint (*śama-dama-ādisādhana-sampad*). The sixth and last of these is, according to the *Vedāntasāra*[6], *śraddhā*, 'faith' interpreted[7] as 'faith in the truths of Vedānta as taught by the *guru*'.[8] Plotinus also mentions faith (*pístis*) in given teachings as a requirement for those who want to contemplate the One.[9]

Even if we were personally and existentially ready to accept faith, it cannot be presupposed in the present study. In philosophy faith prevents communication with those who do not share the same faith. Even though the '*credo ut intelligam*' aspect of philosophy and religion - 'I believe in order that I may understand' - cannot be excluded in advance, it should not be utilized in a philosophical study. One must realise however that this may fundamentally limit our understanding of other philosophies, and therefore our own philosophising.

(ii) Esthetic approach.

The esthetic approach likes the philosophy it deals with. It is ready to pronounce judgments such as 'a profound statement', 'a beautiful passage', 'an impressive thought'. But it is afraid to think clearly and calmly to the end. It escapes, consciously or not, from the philosophical questions: is it true? What does it mean if it is true? What does it imply if it is true? And what does it imply for me if it is true?

3 Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 6.2.9.
4 Bhagavad Gītā, 17.3.
5 Brahmasūtrabhāṣya, 1.1.1.
6 Vedāntasāra 18. (Ed. Bombay 1934; ed. & transl. Almora 1949; Poona 1929).
7 Id. 24.
8 Cf. Vedāntaparibhāsā 9.40 (S.S. Suryanarayana Sastri).
9 Enneads VI.9.4.32 (Bréhier).

The esthetic approach therefore betrays the presence of a weakness of thinking. The final implications are not faced, the philosophy is not taken as what it is meant to be and as what it may have signified for human beings. As such it is irresponsible, it does not rely exclusively upon the one philosophy, but considers it implicity as of relative importance. The esthetic approach dominates many Westerners who are attracted by Oriental systems of thought. They do not ask the question about absolute truth, and they generally do not confront the actual problems of their own life with the philosophies they like. Thus a difference between theory and practice arises. This shows that through the esthetic approach the Romantic movements of the West have been attracted by the East.

This approach can also be evaluated in a different way. If there is no sympathy for a certain way of thinking, or at least for the human beings who thought so, there can be no proper understanding in philosophy, because much in philosophy goes beyond the level of pure reason (certainly in the philosophies studied here). This applies especially in the case of comparative philosophy, where the philosophies studied are often foreign to one's own philosophical climate. Thus a certain degree of congeniality, an initial liking at least in certain respects, is needed.

There is truth too in Augustine's dictum: ‘One does not enter in the truth, if not by charity’[10] and in Pascal's thought: ‘We know the truth not only by reason, but also through our heart.’[11]

(iii) The approach through tradition.

This is an approach, which is properly speaking no approach at all, as there is no question of a movement from a starting point to a goal: there is inmutability. One's own philosophy, as it has been consciously or unconsciously accepted from early childhood, is continuously looked upon as the only valuable philosophy; it may be occasionally restated, even readapted within certain limits

10 ‘Non intratur in veritatem, nisi per charitatem’.

11 ‘Nous connadasons la vérité, non seulement par la raison mais encore par le coeur’: Pensees 282 (Brunschvieg).

and also defended against other views. The truth of the philosophical statements is never doubted or even questioned, nor is the truth of the personal relation to them. New experience is truth of the personal relation to them. New experience is integrated as a confirmation of the old view, absent is the truly 'experiencing attitude': to have no theory, simply to experience in the widest and fullest sense, and afterwards to attempt an explanation which may lead to a theory. This attitude can be in particular dogmatic if it refuses to question the validity of certain principles; in addition to that, it can be traditionalistic if it refuses to question the reliability of those who have transmitted the principles concerned. The disadvantage of self-sufficiency, one-sidedness, etc., belonging to this attitude, are obvious. It may be asked, however, whether there are advantages too.

For this, in our case, we turn to the Indian philosophical climate. Here tradition is essential for several reasons: firstly, the texts often aim at an experience and are most properly transmitted by one who has had that experience: his experience is valued higher than our own free investigation which is considered limited by our mental development. Secondly, there is often an oral tradition alongside the text in which such experiences are embodied, and a traditional way of expounding a text without which it would remain partly unintelligible (not only where religious experience is to be transmitted, but also for instance in scientific disciplines). In Indian philosophy these two factors cause the importance of initiation of a disciple by a qualified teacher.

At the same time it is clear that in this case also there can be no certainty. There is no method whatsoever to ascertain whether there are different kinds or degrees of 'divine' experiences, and there is no guarantee that the word-transcending experience of the *guru* (or even of the student of comparative philosophy) is the same as the experience to which the text alludes. In addition the oral tradition may have undergone innumerable changes in the course of centuries, unmanifest and unverifiable (though there is no parallel in the modern West for the accuracy with which some texts in the Orient - for instance the. Vedas - are orally transmitted and for the power of memory needed therefore). Notwithstanding the obvious reasons for carefulness and

a critical attitude, the student of comparative philosophy has with regard to Indian philosophy to take into account the data provided by this traditional approach, as they may contain elements of truth which are not otherwise accessible. Therefore we must consider the approach through tradition if we want to receive the past as ‘a claim upon us, affecting all that we are’.

Among orientalists, dealing with ancient civilisations that continue to-day (Islam, India, China, until recently perhaps), there is increasing interest for traditional interpretations, because it is realised that the Western philological and historical methods are, in their exclusiveness, not sufficiently adapted to their subject (c.f., for instance, the work on Hindu Tantrism by Sir John Woodroffe or Arthur Avalon, together with his collaborators).[12] The differences between the two methods are brought out clearly by D.H.H. Ingalls.[13]

(iv). Objective truth.

Repeated reference has been made to truth as a goal for the investigations of comparative philosophy. To come closer to this truth and eliminate possibilities of error, the previous three sections have attempted to judge which methods, approaches and attitudes have to be considered. Which truth is meant? Evidently ‘objective’ truth, i.e., the truth of the ideas expressed in a text. For instance if we have a statement in Plotinus' *Enneads* like ‘one need not remember everything which one has seen’, objective truth does not mean that it is true that this statement occurs in the *Enneads* (a truth we have to accept from philologists who have provided us with the text), nor that it was taken from earlier Greek thinkers and in turn taken by later medieval thinkers (a truth to be investigated by historians of philosophy), nor that the manuscript provides us with certain variants; but it

12 The French Arabist Louis Massignon emphasized that the Kuran has to be studied in the light of living tradition, and not by exclusive concentration upon the text.

13 D.H.H. Ingalls, *The Study of Śaṅkarācārya*, Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute 33 (1952) 1-14. The author shows how the traditional method aims at *kūṭasthanityatva*, ‘unchangeable timelessness’, whereas the historical method studies temporal difference.

means that one need not remember everything that one has seen. This can only be established as an objective truth by ascertaining whether everything that has been seen is remembered. We have to effectuate what Edmund Husserl has called the 'historical *epoche*', i.e., refrain from historical judgments about the opinions of others; we are interested in the 'things' themselves. If it can be established that a certain statement corresponds directly to that to which it refers, it is evidently objectively true. This follows from the well known characterisation of truth as '*adequatio intellectus et rei*', the adequacy of the intellectual image of the thing and the thing itself. If the truth is investigated in this sense, it will have answered in a philosophical way to the challenge which each philosophical text contains. Unfortunately this is impossible.

We have assumed that there is an objective truth which can be found by us rather than by the philosophers studied. This pretentious view is not justified. We have no right to believe that philosophy brings questions nearer to a final solution in the course of time, as experience neither shows this nor the contrary. We cannot therefore claim that we belong to a higher level than the thinkers we study, which would enable us to pass final judgments on the truth value. We can at the most investigate our opinion about the 'things' themselves, with which the texts also deal, and then compare the two. But do we not slip back then into relativism? There is no way out of these difficulties unless we are willing to reconsider the concept of objective truth itself.

(v) Existential truth.

Martin Heidegger[14] has analysed the traditional concept of truth as '*adequatio rei et intellectus*'[15] and has shown how this derives from an original concept of truth as dis-covery and dis-covering. Anything which is dis-covered in this sense has a 'discovered-being' ('*Entdecktheit*') which is called truth. The human being ('*Dasein*') who has originally discovered it, has a 'discovering-being' ('*Entdeckendsein*'), which is also called truth.

14 Sein und Zeit, par. 44; Cf. Vom Wesen der Wahrheit, Frankfurt 1943.
15 This so-called correspondence theory of truth is also criticised, but from a totally different point of view, by logicians, e.g., A.J. Ayer, *Truth*, Revue internationale de philosophie 7 (1953): 183-200. Cf, JSL. 20 (1955) 58.

But these truths as ‘discovered-being’ and ‘discovering-being’ are only possible on account of a special mode of human being, which is therefore to be called ‘truth’ in the original and primary sense, whereas discovered-being is true in the secondary sense. Secondary truth depends on primary truth. Thus there is only truth in so far and as long as there is human being (‘Dasein’). Heidegger illustrates this with the laws of Newton, which were before Newton neither true nor false. With these laws, however, being was discovered and showed itself as being, which had existed previously. There can be ‘eternal truths’ if human being is proved to be eternal, which is not the case. ‘Objective truths’ are not only erroneously conceived as eternal, but also presuppose that there could be discovered-being without discoveringbeing, which is not so.

Heidegger's concept of truth corresponds not so much to the notion of truth which everyday language uses for instance in: ‘his statement is true’ as to that which is used in: ‘he is a true friend’ and still more in: ‘he is true to himself’. By the thesis that the former kind of truth depends upon the latter kind, no subjectivism is intended. It merely means that the foundation of a concept which has become apparently self-evident is made visible by means of a phenomenological, ‘hermeneutical’, analysis. - Since ‘*Dasein*’ is temporal (‘*zeitlich*’), Heidegger's analysis implies a certain ‘temporality’ of truth, which he has not further specified.[16]

It is possible to give several interpretations of Heidegger's thesis. For our purpose, we will try to confront the philosophies studied with a truth concept referring to the student of comparative philosophy rather than to these philosophies. This exemplifies one way in which this concept of truth can be understood. Accordingly we will not ask the unanswerable and meaningless (according to Heidegger's analysis) question of objective truth, but inquire how far we can establish a relation which can be called true between ourselves and the philosophies studied, Advaita and Neoplatonism. Thus we may discover truth and discover ourselves.

16 Cf., however, Sein und Zeit par, 76.

(B). The problem of historicism.

The history of philosophy shows different thinkers stating different truths. If we classify them historically we find different ages believing in different truths. We can try to find the 'real' truth by comparing these different ideas and concepts; but then we forget that we necessarily belong to our own age and hence will be inclined to accept as true that which is considered true in this age. Wilhelm Dilthey, who was fully aware of this 'problem of historicism' saw no other task for philosophy than a historical treatment of all philosophical systems. One wonders whether there is a way out of this difficulty.

If the problem is stated thus (and we shall see that it is only possible to state it in a slightly different way) theoretically no solution is possible. We cannot become independent from our own age, and there would be no standard to measure such independence. Even if we should state an objective, 'timeless' truth concerning any philosophical idea expressed in the course of history, we would have no certainty that it was such a truth. Burckhardt once expressed this by defining history as an account of the facts which one age considers important in another age.

We cannot break through this circle, but it leads to a conclusion with respect to method. In the history of Western philosophy we see 'not at all the perpetual change of standpoints, which historicism claims, but the amazing continuity, with which European thinking reflects upon the same themes and problems'.[17] When dealing with the history of Western philosophy, therefore, we can only hope to arrive at a relatively correct picture by showing the relationship of a certain period to our own period and by becoming conscious of our own position in this way. In another way we reach the same conclusion i.e. that we should be related to the philosophies studied and study this relationship.

17 'Was uns die Geschichte der Philosophie tatächlich zeigt ist aber gar nicht der vom Historismus behauptete unaufhörliche Wechsel der Weltansichten, sondern lie erstaunliche Kontinuität, mit der das abendländische Denken immer wieder dieselben Themen und Probleme durchdenkt': K. Löwith, *Die Dynamik der Geschichte und der Historismus*, ERANOS - Jahrbuch 1952, Zürich 1953, 217-254: 237.

In Indian philosophy 'most of the systems developed side by side through the centuries' and this development made them 'more and more differentiated, determinate and coherent'.[18] It is possible to give fundamental points of agreement between all of them.[19] A modern Indian can study Indian philosophy on account of this continuity and tradition. But how can comparative philosophy grasp its subject? For a Westerner, the only possibility is to find *in the Western philosophical tradition* which factors can account for the understanding of Oriental philosophy. The corresponding historical question is how and when Oriental philosophies entered the West. Comparative philosophers should first study how *it became possible on account of the internal development of Western philosophy for Oriental philosophies to be studied in Western civilisation. Oriental philosophies can be studied in Western philosophy only as possibilities of Western philosophy*, just as, in (existential) phenomenology in general *the phenomena can only be understood as possibilities of human existence*.[20]

(C). The concept of time.

The first to deal with the history of philosophy in a similar way was Nietzsche in '*Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*' (1873). He exemplifies here the unity between scholar and human existence. Unfortunately the unity between subject and object led in this early work to subjective statements. This is the danger inherent in a method, which includes the relation of the person studying to the philosophy studied - but it is no reason to abandon this method for the sake of so-called impersonal objectivity.

In the prefaces of his work of 1874 (?) and 1879 Nietzsche expresses a view which is typical of the European attitude with regard to the history of philosophy: 'Philosophical systems are absolutely true only to their founders, to all later philosophers

18 S.N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy I*, Cambridge 1922, 5.
19 Id. 71-75; M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, London 1932, Introduction.
20 See below: II, 5: 66.

they are usually *one* big mistake....'.[21] He turns to the personal element as the only irrefutable element: 'For in systems which have been refuted it is only this personal element that can still interest us, for this alone is eternally irrefutable'.[22]

In the West there is also a contrary opinion. This is a consequence of a particular view of time.[23] We will sketch this concept of time which is of Christian origin (but since long secularised in different ways) and compare it with the Greek as well as the Indian view.

In Greece and India time is generally conceived as cyclical. The world is a perpetually recurring phenomenon. The deity is above these circles and is non-temporal; hence, especially in India, time is little valued. In Christianity God manifests himself in time. He has created the world once and Christ has come once, just as there will be in the end one Day of Judgment. This rectilinear view forms the background of the later ideas of evolution and progress. We must understand this as constituent of European consciousness (which at the same time remains often unconscious), not as a belief in external progress or evolution. For the Occidental possibilities are always open towards the future and can always be realised in the present. What has happened, happened once and for all; we can learn from it because tradition forms our consciousness. Through the process of time we will be able to find truth. This is no vulgar and unreflected optimism; it is a mode of conceiving our experiences, a kind of (cultural) *a priori*. From this view the doctrine that truth is temporal arose.

21 Transl. M.A. Mugge, London 1924. - 'Nun sind philosophische Systeme nur für ihre Grunder ganz wahr: für alle späteren Philosophen gewöhnlich *ein* grosser Fehler......'

22 'Denn an Systemen, die widerlegt sind, kanz uns eben nur noch das Persönliche interessieren, denn dies ist das ewig Unwiderlegbare'.

23 Cf H. - C. Puech, Temps, histoire et mythe dans le christianisme des premiers siècles, Proceedings of the 7th Congr. for the History of Religions, Amsterdam 1951, 33-53; the author's Over het cyclische en het rechtlijnige tijdsbegrip, Amsterdam 1954, the bibliography of which refers to the important authors on the subject, e.g., apart from Puech, O. Cullmann, M. Eliade, J. Guitton, etc. See also below III, 1: 164 sq.

The Indian view is, like the ancient Greek one, connected with a different sentiment ('*Stimmung*'): the ideal is at the beginning; it is the golden age, the age of Kronos amongst the Greeks and the *Satya yuga* of each *kalpa* in Hinduism. Thus we should look back, and try to restore and preserve tradition faithfully.

We have given a rough sketch, in black and white as it were, of the complicated picture reality offers. However, the circular view exists also in the West, whereas the rectilinear view is at present influencing the whole of Asia. Here we are interested in these concepts in so far as they reflect a method for the history of philosophy. Each attitude affects every total view, also if the contrary view is taken into account. Nietzsche[24] manifests an attitude with regard to history, which is mainly determined by a feeling of 'being ahead'. The Occidental may look back at sources because they led to later developments which are his real concern. The Indian looks in general at sources as the richest germs, the later development of which is an adaptation to changing circumstances and often a degeneration ('*Hiraṇyagarbha*').

In the study of comparative philosophy one has to be aware of this difference, especially in the study of Plotinus and Śaṅkara, both 'circularists', whereas the modern Western view is mainly (but not exclusively) 'rectilinear'. Similarly the aim at a 'personal' approach differs greatly from both 'object' -philosophies.[25] *Only a conscious use of inevitable, but often unconscious modern Western concepts may clear the way for a relatively adequate understanding of philosophies like Advaita and Neoplatonism, which utilize different concepts*. Only in this way one may attain awareness of and perhaps independence from one's own concepts and basic presuppositions.

24 It cannot be shown here that Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence of the identical ('*die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*'), according to Heidegger his central doctrine, rests on assumptions that are alien to the Indian as well as (in a lesser degree) to the Greek ideas; paradoxically as it may seem, they are connected with the attitude and the sentiment of 'rectilinear' time.

25 See below III, 5.

4. *Method*

In the previous sections several references have been made to method. As in this matter everything is interconnected, we have touched upon some topics under different headings. Now a survey will be given of four points which are of primary importance in dealing with comparative philosophy.

(A). The 'Standard Consciousness'

It passes our understanding how scholars have been able to compare two philosophies, without realising that a standard of comparison is needed resulting from a third philosophy (which, in special cases, may be the same as the first or the second). That this has generally not been realised can only mean that this third philosophy remained unconscious and manifested itself only indirectly in the principles of comparison, in treatment, methods, order, and evaluation of what is considered as important and finally in the conclusions. Our first aim is to become conscious of this 'standard philosophy' and to make it explicit.

The 'standard philosophy' cannot be chosen arbitrarily, as we have stressed before: it is the attitude of the modern Westerner, in as far as it implicitly contains a philosophy. This 'standard philosophy' manifests itself in the 'standard consciousness' of the modern Occidental. To describe it fully would mean to describe what (better: who) the modern Westerner is, which is of course impossible in the present context. This 'standard consciousness' can be considered as consisting of a great number of 'constituents'. It is our task to investigate which are the most important of these in the present context. An example mentioned before is the 'rectilinear concept of time', which can be called one of the (very important) constituents of the standard consciousness.

The discovery of these constituents is a matter of enlarging our consciousness; it can be brought about by phenomenological analysis and study of the history of Western philosophy. It may lead to the awareness of what might be called '*cultural apriorism*'. The importance of comparative philosophy lies for a great part in this discovery of 'cultural a prioris' - concepts and ideas which are considered as self-evident in a certain culture, but which may

become relativised when other cultures are studied. What is most interesting in comparative philosophy is not the comparison (a purely academical achievement), but the better understanding of the compared terms and of one's own 'standard consciousness'.

(B). The existential attitude.

An existential attitude requires the absence of what has been referred to as relativistic indifference, esthetic approach, and dogmatic traditionalism, as well as the presence of a readiness to accept what is studied as a 'claim upon ourselves, affecting all that we are'. This readiness is essential; whether we are 'totally affected' depends of course on our subject and on our own nature. This attitude can be specified in two respects which are each other's complements.

Firstly, we should not only have an 'open mind', i.e., a tolerant attitudes but we should also possess what could be called an '*open personality*', i.e., a personal attitude of studying a certain philosophy in complete freedom, ready to accept that what we find may be the truth and may have to replace what we accepted as true before. As this requirement is not easy to fulfil, it is useful to realise always that philosophy is intended for human beings as a standard and guide to life. Nothing is better, therefore, than actual contact with these human beings, a possibility which can be realised in the case of all 'living' philosophies.

The 'open personality', however, entails as its corollary a second attitude. If we are not personally involved, we can study and compare many philosophies. But if we are personally involved, we cannot escape *choice*. After the readiness to accept what characterizes an open personality, we have to choose which philosophies or doctrines we are going to reject or accept ourselves. Remembering Nietzsche's remark we may say that no philosophies of the past are generally accepted in their totality. But each detail and aspect can claim the right to be accepted or rejected, i.e., to be taken seriously. To hesitate because of an attitude of prudence and precaution, which the self-criticism of the sciences has produced, can be considered an aspect of this attitude of choice, provided hesitation results from a personal conflict (in

the sense in which Pascal said, that there is no living belief without doubt), and not from a desire to escape.

This kind of choice was first stressed by Kierkegaard.

(C). The historical character.

Constituents of the standard consciousness can be discovered through a phenomenological analysis of the treatment of ‘foreign’ philosophies. However this can be achieved more easily through historical analysis of the background of standard consciousness, i.e., through studying relevant parts of the history of one's own philosophy. A Westerner must study the main lines of development of Western philosophy before he is able to approach Oriental philosophies. Then only does he know the answers and attitudes of Western thought which influence his approach. Only then can he know in how far he understands other philosophies and in how far he is *a priori* in a position to understand them. Without this preparation there will be no adequate understanding and nothing is reached but the mistake of which Faust was reproached by the vanishing spirit:

You resemble the spirit, whom you understand already, Not me![26]

This happens frequently when Westerners deal with the Orient, though there may be no spirit to tell them so.

(D). The circular procedure.

When we stressed a certain difference in the concept of time between Indian and modern Western philosophy, which would have to be taken into account when approaching Indian thought, it may have seemed that a grave methodological error was made: we used a certain knowledge of Indian philosophy in order to understand Indian philosophy - apparently a vicious circle. Likewise, in other sections of this first part some knowledge of Advaita will be presumed and utilized.

This is however not a mistake but an inevitable procedure inherent in our method. As soon as some knowledge of Indian philosophy is acquired it produces a certain attitude which influ-

26 Goethe, *Faust I: Du gleichst dem Geist den du begreifst, Nicht mir!*

ences our views with respect to Western as well as Indian thought. It is therefore impossible to give a linear enumeration of subjects in a philosophical treatment. Philosophical knowledge is always a process, which is never achieved and in which everything is interconnected. The reason for this is that a personal connection with 'the material' is desirable, so that all previously acquired knowledge, which has become part of the investigator's consciousness, has to be taken into account. A treatment which would not consider the interdependence of all terms would be unconsciously dependent upon other factors than those dealt with at the moment.

Thus we shall utilize throughout a certain knowledge of Advaita as well as of Neoplatonism. Arriving at the comparison itself, our procedure will consist in a gradual refinement and a continuous testing of initial 'working' opinions. This procedure belongs to the method used here, for it is the actual procedure developing in the mind, before an artificial shifting and selecting, philosophically obscure and phenomenologically not given, will take place.

Those who object to this apparent impurity can realise its inevitability by reflecting upon the analogous 'circular procedures' which have been manifest throughout Western philosophy, for instance in Parmenides' fragment: 'for me it is common, wherever I start; for there I will again return,[27]' and likewise in Hegel, Dilthey and Heidegger.[28]

5. *On synthesis and choice*

In comparative philosophy several constituents of the standard consciousness determine the approach, consciously or unconsciously. One of the most important of these is the underlying *aim* of the student in which is embodied the answer to the question: in the search for truth, should philosophies be synthetised, or should a choice be made between them? We have voted already for the second alternative. But when scholars conclude appa-

27 5. 1-2 (Diels).
28 See e.g., the beginning of the Hegel-monograph by T, Litt. Cf. Śein und Zeit, par. 7 et *passim*.

rently logically on apparently purely phenomenological grounds, that we can arrive at a world philosophy by synthetising the main philosophical trends, or alternatively when scholars arrive at the acceptance of one philosophy while rejecting the others, such 'conclusions' merely manifest deeper lying and generally hidden attitudes of synthesis or choice.

Western consciousness possesses in the first place a constituent of choice, and only in the second place one of synthesis. This could be shown by historical analysis, which would at the same time show the subordinate place of the synthetising attitude, and the repeated reactions against, it. A short summary of this development will be given below. It will be shown in the second and third parts[29] that in Indian philosophy in general, but in the philosophies under consideration in particular, the synthetising attitude prevails.

As for choice, the essential dependence of Western philosophy upon the '*tertium non datur*' and the '*principium contradictionis*' must be emphasized: Aristotle said 'Each statement is either true or untrue'[30] and 'The same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject in the same respect'.[31] Aristotle has shown that even those, who would, 'seriously or for the sake of argument' oppose these principles, accept them in fact and utilize them unconsciously. His argument remains largely valid, whereas it seems that the reaction against it culminating in the multi-valued logics based upon the intuitionism of L.E.J. Brouwer, remain as yet secondary trends in Western philosophy.[32]

29 See esp. II 13.

30 *De Interpretatione* 9, 18 a 37-38.

31 *Metaphysics* Γ 3, 1005 b 19-20.

32 I cannot agree with the thesis of C.T.K. Chari (*On the dialectical affinities between East and West*, Philosophy East and West 3 (1953-1954) 199-221, 32-336), that there is a kind of parallelism between the multivalued logics and some Oriental modes of thought, for the following reasons: (1) in a three-valued logic, which is itself a meaningless formal system like its generalisations into multivalued logics, only one meaningful interpretation in the semantics can be given to the third value 'u': it means 'undecided', and this means in general: 'not yet decided', and possibly: never to be decided. But this is not in contradiction with the law of contradiction; as nobody doubts that the truth value, once the decision may have taken place, will be either 't' (true) or 'f' (false). The difficulty arises, as Brouwer has pointed out, because we are dealing in such cases with infinite sets. (2) When a mystic affirms: God is neither a nor non-a, the logical meaning of this statement can only be that God transcends such attributions, which does not contradict the law of the excluded middle. Example: ad (1): define a number A as follows: A = 1, if anywhere in the decimal development of π a sequence of five sevens occurs; A = 0, if nowhere in the decimal development of π a sequence of five sevens occurs. Now to the statement 'P', meaning: 'A = 1' the truth value 'u' has to be assigned; but nobody doubts that we may be either able to prove A = 1, and hence the statement P obtains the value t; or that we may be able to prove A = 0, and hence the statement P gets the value f. There is no possibility that both are realizable whereas the value 'u' is preserved to express the fact that no proof is yet realised. - ad. (2): if we say 'God is light and God is not light' it does not mean that we expect that we will one day be able to prove that God is light and to refute the reverse, or conversely; but it means that God can in some respect be said to be light, and in some other respect not to be light. But this does not contradict the law of contradiction, because it is exactly for this reason that Aristotle had added the clause 'in the same respect' (*katà tô autó*). - See also below II, 11: 120.

Just as the foundation for the logical attitude of choice was laid by Aristotle, the foundation for the existential attitude of choice was laid by Christ.[33] This is observable throughout the New Testament, e.g., in: 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me'.[34] Such passages are not lacking in other religions, but they have perhaps never been taken so seriously and so much emphasised as in Christianity. This becomes especially clear in the scenes of Christ's temptations by the devil, where three alternatives are offered and rejected in three acts of choice.[35] Dostoievski has given an existential interpretation of these passages and has thereby shown how this attitude has remained of central

33 The existential choice is also announced in Greek philosophy, as I hope to show elsewhere.
34 Matth. 10.34-37; Cf. Luke 12.51-53; 14.26,27; Micah. 7.6
35 Math. 4.1-11; cf. Mark 1.12,13; Luke, 4.1-13.

significance in the West.[36] In the Faust legend the choice for the devil shows how negative choice is as decisive and existentially irrevocable as positive choice. Reacting against the synthesizing efforts of Hegel, Kierkegaard considers choice, which was already announced by Pascal, the decisive factor of human existence. Existentialism has developed this and expressed it in a more philosophical way.

With Plotinus, who was in this respect a forerunner of Hegel, the synthesizing attitude becomes predominant in Greek thought. In his age, syncretism, for which Alexandria was the symbol, had become widespread. The synthesizing attitude of Plotinus is connected with his traditionalism which will be studied below.[37] This holds similarly for many currents in Indian philosophy, and in particular for Śaṅkara's Advaita.[38] The synthesizing attitude is still more characteristic of Śrī Aurobindo.[39]

The synthesizing attitude, a minor trend of thought in Europe, has become important in the United States. The historical reasons for this are clear. The American quest for a world-philosophy, as expressed for instance in the East-West philosopher's Conferences held in Hawaii, 'Attempts at World Philosophical Synthesis', by scholars like C.A. Moore, E.A. Burtt, F.C.S. Northrop and others,[40] has found little response in Europe. On the other hand, the philosophies which emphasize choice, e.g., existentialism, have been often misunderstood in the United States (and in the English speaking world in general).

6. *On influences*

Those who are interested in comparative philosophy have often occupied themselves with possible influences of philosophies upon each other. The problem of the possible historical influences of Indian thought upon Advaita will be discussed below in an

36 in: *The Brothers Karamazov*, Book 5, Chapter 5: The Great Inquisitor.
37 See below III 1.
38 See below II 13.
39 See below p. 134-5, n. 444 and p. 137, n. 449.
40 Cf. the journal: Philosophy East and West - A Journal of Oriental and Comparative Thought, published by C.A. Moore in Honolulu, Hawaii.

appendix. However a general remark may be made about this problem, though it is not primarily a philosophical question. The treatment of problems of influence and of origination depends on philosophical convictions, and therefore, in the case of comparative philosophy, on constituents of the standard consciousness.

The constituents concerned are those regarding causality. Here opinions range between two extremes: the docrtine of the 'preexistence of the effect in the cause'[41] and the doctrine of '*creatio ex nihilo*'.[42] Whoever is inclined, perhaps unconsciously, to the first view, will tend to stress points which are common to a certain field and its preceding background, and interpret these as effect and cause respectively; whoever is inclined to the other view will stress the differences and try to show that there are elements of the later phenomenon counterparts of which cannot be found in the earlier phenomenon. The first view stresses causality and is especially appropriate for scientific explanations; rationality requires a certain amount of identity. Whoever holds the second view is in a better position to understand phenomena such as creativity and freedom. In these cases the approach determines the result up to a degree which varies with each case. It will be seen how far our comparative study depends upon the view which stresses '*creatio ex nihilo*'; for in comparisons we will often stress the differences.

The same consideration applies to the different views on possible Oriental origins of Greek civilisation. It becomes clear how Westerners, stressing the novelty of phenomena in general, came to speak about '*le miracle grec*' for denoting the increase of creativity in Greek culture during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. The impact of these constituents is considerable and should not be underrated. It should not be concluded, however, that statements concerning influences and origins can never be valid conclusions from phenomenological observations.

One other factor has to be considered. When influences are supposed to exist, it is not enough to prove this supposition by

41 e.g. the Indian *Satkāryavāda*. See below II. 12: 126.
42 The theistic (Judaic, Christian, Muslim) doctrine; and the Nyāya *ārambhavāda*.

showing that similarities exist, that historical contacts took place, that more direct influences cannot account for a certain development and that the creativity and originality of the philosophers concerned were not a sufficient explanation. In addition to this the susceptibility, by which a certain existing influence was also accepted and absorbed, must be explained. This can only be done by studying the philosophical characteristics of doctrines supposed to have undergone influence. Philosophical investigations into parallels and similarities should therefore precede historical investigations into the problem of actual influences. In short the capacity to be influenced has to be understood as a possible development of the entity which has undergone an influence.

7. *Comparative philosophy and the Orient*

A few remarks may be added which apply in particular to the comparison of Western and Eastern philosophies by Westerners.[43] If a previous remark, i.e., that Oriental philosophies can only be studied as possibilities of Western philosophy, is true, the question arises what is 'the Orient' as a constituent of the Occident.

For this extensive historical investigations would be required. It may be shortly indicated in which direction such specifications should be sought, disregarding many details.

It can be said that Western culture is built upon a double foundation: Greek culture and Christian religion. Christianity follows upon Judaism and is, like Judaism, generally regarded as an Oriental religion. At the same time it has become the religion of the West. Having shaped the whole of Western civilisation (not exclusively in the religious realm), it is tightly interwoven with Greek elements and is traceable and visible almost everywhere (also in secularisation, itself a phenomenon of Christian

43 Philosophically, it remains justified to speak of East and West, though the terms are generalisations and though we know that 'East' and 'West' in the most general sense, applying to all fields of life, are abstractions. See esp. P.J. Zoetmulder, *Cultuur Oost en West*, Amsterdam 1951, reviewed by C.Tj. Bertling in: Bijdragen Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde 108, 2.

origin). The continuous struggle and tension between Greek and Christian elements is one of the main reasons for the Western search for self-knowledge. Because of this the West does not only contain, but is in its inner essence constituted by an Oriental element. The discrimination 'East and West' did arise in the West because the West itself covers East and West. Therefore the West is vitally interested in the East. It has a greater understanding (not only enumerative and 'external' knowledge, as it is sometimes said) of the East, than the East has of the West - for the simple historical reasons that some of its knowledge of the East results from self-knowledge. The East is more than a mirror into which the West looks, as has been said.[44] The West sees in the East at a 'safe' distance something which internally moves itself and which therefore fascinates it. There is no doubt that the fascination for the Orient among Westerners (which has a different character from the enthusiasm of some modern Orientals for the West) has to be partly explained on account of this.

However, the advantage of a first understanding implies a disadvantage: the Orient is the scene on which the West projects; it is a *receptacle* of *Western projections*. Though the sources of these projections are often Oriental, there is no guarantee that the reality upon which these projections are imposed corresponds to the image. So, paradoxically as it may seem, the misunderstanding of the East by the West is also greater than that of the West by the East. All this could originate, because there is an urge in the West towards the East 'which is outside', because of the East 'which is inside'. The primary step to be taken by Westerners who want to have a real understanding of any aspect of the East, is to try to *remove the projections*.

As Christianity may be considered the 'Oriental element' in Western civilisation, it might be assumed that always Christianity is projected upon Oriental systems of thought. This has very often been the case at least unconsciously, for conciously the Christian claim of unicity tended to differentiate, which was favourable for later scholarly discrimination. But Christianity is by no means the only source of projections. The actual situation is less

44 H.S. Nyberg, *Das Studium des Orients und die europäische Kultur*, Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft 103 (1953) 9-21: 20.

simple and consists of an increasing number of structures and superstructures, of which little is known.

The Christian element is emotionally connected with the Orient (though a deeper analysis shows that certain Oriental modes of thought are more Greek in character than Christian - as will be repeatedly seen in this study). This is connected with the history of Western Orientalism. This discipline originated when Bible study was revived on account of Protestantism. Hebrew language and thought were studied, and subsequently other Semitic languages, especially Arabic (and hence Islam). Once the study of Oriental languages and cultures had begun, India became the great rediscovery of the Romantic movements[45] and China of the Enlightenment.

Apart from this religious relation to the Orient, fore-shadowed in Christianity and symbolized in the words: '*Ex Oriente Lux*' - 'The light comes from the East' - the relation between West and East has also been conceived as a relation of tension and opposition, as for instance in the wars of Greece against the Persians or in the crusades against the Muslims. Also in this connection Western consciousness arose but as a reaction and protest against the great Oriental powers - with the consciousness of the child, who revolts against his parents, and sets himself free. Nietzsche's somewhat exaggerated words about the relations of the Greeks to other countries apply in particular to the Orient: 'Nothing is more foolish than to swear by the fact that the Greeks had an aboriginal culture; no, they rather absorbed all the culture flourishing amongst other nations, and they advanced so far, just because they understood how to hurl the spear further from the very spot where another nation had let it rest'.[46]

Both attitudes resulted in what may be called historical consciousness, itself a development of the Christian concepts of time and history. Nyberg says about what could be called the *oriento-*

45 Cf. above, p. 7.

46 Transl. M.A. Mugge, London 1924 - 'Nichts ist törichter, als den Griechen eine autochtone Bildung nachzusagen, sie haben vielmehr alle bei anderen Volkern lebende Bildung in sich eingesogen, sie kamen gerade deshalb so weit, weil sie es verstanden, den Speer von dort weiter zu schleudern, wo ihn ein anderes Volk liegen liess' (o.c., 1).

version of Western historical consciousness: ‘Only contact with the Orient and our capacity to assimilate this meeting internally caused the origin and development of historical consciousness.’[47]

8. *Comparative philosophy and Advaita*

Advaita also presents an inner possibility of Western philosophy (this does not mean that we are entitled to affirm dogmatically that the West has its own Advaita; but it means that what we can philosophically understand of Indian Advaita can only be the development of a possibility of Western thought).[48] Some material will here be presented which may contribute to the solution of the problem of the philosophical foundation of ‘Western Advaita’. It may be suggested as a tentative solution to this problem that modern Western interest in philosophies like Advaita, is only the latest form of an ancient ‘counter-tradition’ of *impersonalism*. This tradition starts with Neoplatonism (according to Emile Bréhier),[49] or at least contains Neoplatonism as one of its earliest manifestations. It re-appeared regularly and has been repeatedly criticised and rejected. In a similar manner as Augustine rejected Plotinus, the medieval church rejected Meister Eckehart, Muslim orthodoxy[50] rejected Ibn 'Arabī and, in only a partly secularized way, Kierkegaard rejected Hegel.[51]. We look through Neoplatonic eyes at Advaita, and the attitude of Western thought with regard to Neoplatonism predetermines our attitude to Advaita.

Finally a few remarks may be added about Schopenhauer and Deussen, the first philosophical interpreters of Advaita in Europe, for they do not seem to belong to the impersonalist tradition. The incorrectness of their historical perspective, which nowadays seems

47 ‘Erst die Berührung mit dem Orient und unsere Fähigkeit, diese Begegnung innerlich zu erleben haben bei uns das geschichtliche Bewusstsein erweckt und erweitert’ (Ibid).
48 Moreover it is not at all against the spirit of Advaita to be expounded in different ways: cf. T.M.P. Mahadevan, Western Vedänta in: *Vedänta for modern man*, New York, 1951, 15-19.
49 *La philosophie de Plotin*, Paris 1928, Chap. VII: ‘Avec Plotin, nous saississons done le premier chaînon d'une tradition religieuse, qui n'est pas moins puissante que la tradition chrétienne....’
50 e.g. Ibn. Taimīya.
51 see e.g. M. Bense, *Hegel und Kierkegaard*, Kōln-Krefeld 1948.

evident, can be easily gathered from a booklet by Deusson entitled '*Vedänta and Platonism in the light of Kantian philosophy*'.[52] There Indian thinkers are regarded as subjective idealists, especially Sankara, notwithstanding the essential differences between Advaita and subjective idealism.[53] Moreover, Parmenides and Plato are also interpreted in a Kantian way: for instance, when Parmenides speaks about being as indivisible and unchanging, it is argued that indivisibility excludes space and time from being and immutability excludes causality (which is true), so that these entities have to be attributed to the human subject in the Kantian sense. Lastly, Kant himself is interpreted in a Schopenhauerian (i.e. metaphysical) way, through the identification of will as the thing in itself. Through all these interpretations and interpolations a unified and apparently final world view has come into being. No major difficulties are left for a philosopher like Deussen. But in fact we have not gone beyond the philosophy of Schopenhauer, itself only one of the possible developments of Kant's thought, the latter itself only one of the various outcomes of Greek philosophy combined with later reflection and analysis. And likewise an interpretation of Advaita is given, which tells us more about Schopenhauer than about Advaita.

52 P. Deussen, *Vedänta und Platonismus im Lichte der Kantischen Philosophie*, Berlin 1922.
53 See below II, 11: 123.

Part II
The Metaphysics of Advaita

Introduction

Much has been written about the Advaita Vedānta of Śrī Saṅkarācārya. When in the following pages another attempt is made to describe the main features of his metaphysics little that is new can be achieved. Especially in this field of Indian philosophy, the widespread quest for originality has to give way to the more modest recognition of work previously done by noteworthy scholars. Still controversies remain concerning the significance, if not the interpretations of several points of the Ācārya's doctrine. In the following description and analysis the search for a more existential characteristic in the sense laid down in the first part has led to special attention being paid to three concepts which denote entities rooted in human being: sacrifice, meditation and knowledge. All three are closely related to the Vedic scriptures which every Hindu (who is *vaidika, āstika*) accepts: sacrifice is the act prescribed in the Veda; meditation takes place according to the supposed injunctions in the Veda; knowledge comprises what is taught in the Veda. These are the central 'existential' acts or attitudes from which the various concepts of Advaita came into being. A short investigation into the meaning of *śruti* and *smṛti* will therefore precede the main description. Here stress will be laid upon the sacred texts as they occur in Śaṅkara's works and especially in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, as the investigation is not historical but searches for the significance *śruti* and *smṛti* had for Śaṅkara. Likewise, the following remarks (under 1.) are not intended as a short description of the historical development from the Veda to the Vedānta, but intend to point out the influence of the older tradition on Śafiṅkara's works.

Concerning historical factors it must again be borne in mind that the question of methodological approach is related to the background of the investigator, and that it is not often on objective grounds that scholars utilize to a greater or lesser degree the historical approach. This is evident from the fact that most Western

scholars pay much attention to the historical order of texts, manifesting thereby the stress laid in European philosophy on time and history; whereas most Indian scholars disregard historical problems in favour of the philosophical questions concerned, thereby showing the low evaluation of the temporal in Indian thought. A phenomenological investigation into the desirability and justifiability of either approach has to proceed on the basis of the material studied. As long as this is not explicitly questioned it will be advisable to follow a more or less ‘middle path’. We shall not hesitate to elucidate points which are not fully clear or which are insufficiently developed in Śaṅkara, in the light of earlier as well as later texts. But on the other hand we will not attribute these later developments to Śaṅkara himself nor claim that they were ‘potentially’ contained in his works. For by this practice we would have implicitly voted for *satkāryavāda*, a metaphysical doctrine which itself constitutes a problem.[1]

Over a considerable length of time it has been fashionable to approach philosophical problems from an epistemological point of view and to claim this as the only sound and reliable method. This has been an increasing tendency in Western philosophy from the beginning of the modern period, after the middle ages, until Kant, and it has also been an important element in later Advaita, e.g., in the *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya*[2] or in the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*.[3] Accordingly it is often said that Śaṅkara recognised three valid means of knowledge (*pramāṅas*): perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*) and scriptural testimony (*śabda*).[4] But no explicit discussion of these *pramāṇas* occurs in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* where especially the *śabdapramāṇa* is stressed. Though in later Advaita six *pramāṇas* are recognized,[5] it seems more true to the spirit of Śaṅkara's Advaita not to apply this epistemological

1 Cf. below II, 12: 126.
2 Of the 12th century, made partly accessible in: A. Bhattacharya Sastri: *Studies in Post-Śaṅkara dialectics*, Calcutta, 1936.
3 Of the 17th century. Ed. and trans. Madras 1942.
4 e.g. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* II, New York - London, 1951, 488.
5 See P. Deussen, *The System of the Vedānta*, Chicago 1912, 89-90. In BSB 2.1.11 a quotation occurs of Manusmrti (XII 105, 106); ‘Perception, inference and the *śāstra* according to the various traditions, this triad is to be known well by one desiring clearness in regard to right’,

monism, and accordingly not to make an attempt to build his Vedānta upon an epistemological basis. Nearer to the Eastern as well as Western (Greek and medieval) traditional outlook are the later developments of Western philosophy, where it is realised that all epistemology is rooted in human being or is at any rate dependent upon the general structure of being, so that it is an ontological mistake to make a discussion of the validity of knowledge the starting point of metaphysics.[6] For those who have much regard for the epistemological approach - it is not our task to refute such a view, as has been done in post-Kantian philosophy[7] - the following investigation may be considered an inquiry into the nature and background of *ṇabdapramāṇa*.

That the *Brahmasūtras* themselves entitle us to stress above all the importance of *śabda* is evident right from the beginning: 'Then therefore the enquiry into Brahman' (*athāto brahmajijṇāsā*) says the first *sūtra*, and the third: '(The omniscience of Brahman follows) from its being the source of scripture' (*śāstrayonitvāt*). The object of Uttara Mīmāṇ̂sā is the enquiry (*jijñāsā*) into Brahman and Brahman is the source (*yoni*) of the scripture. Śaṅkara also refers to another interpretation where *śruti*, taken as a means of valid knowledge, leads to Brahman. The commentary itself leaves no doubt about the importance of *śabda*, scriptural testimony or revelation, as has been shown previously by Deussen[8] and recently by Lacombe.[9] The latter has analysed a passage,[10] which states that our chains of inference starting from perception cannot reach Brahman; they are important only on the basis of revelation. Not only does the idea of the Absolute depend on *śabda* (Lacombe speaks in this connection somewhat misleadingly of 'theology', a monotheistic term, as perhaps 'revelation' is too), but the whole of metaphysics depends on it, as for instance *vivartavāda*: for *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna* can only lead to *pariṇāmavāda*.[11] In short the suprasensible realm is exclusively the

6 See e.g. M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* par. 31-33.
7 Especially (implicitly) in phenomenology.
8 O.c. 94-96: 'The revelation of the Veda'.
9 O. Lacombe, L'Absolu selon le Védānta, Paris 1937, 218-224; 'Raison et révélation'.
10 2.1.11.
11 See below II. 12.

sphere of *śabda*. Śaṇkara says: 'It is impossible to reach suprasensible objects without the *śāstras'*.[12] Some portions of the text analysed by Lacombe and referred to above run as follows: 'In matters to be known from Scripture mere reasoning is not to be relied on for the following reason also. As the thoughts of men are altogether unfettered, reasoning which disregards the holy texts and rests on individual opinion only has no proper foundation. We see how arguments, which some clever men had excogitated with great pains, are shown, by people still more ingenious, to be fallacious, and how the arguments of the latter again are refuted in their turn by other men; so that, on account of the diversity of men's opinions, it is impossible to accept mere reasoning as having a sure foundation. Nor can we get over this difficulty by accepting as well-founded the reasoning of some person of recognised mental eminence, may he now be Kapila or anybody else; since we observe that even men of the most undoubted mental eminence, such as Kapila, Kaṇāda, and other founders of philosophical schools, have contradicted one another...[13] It is clear that in the case of a perfect knowledge (*samyagjñāna*) a mutual conflict of men's opinions is impossible. But that cognitions founded on reasoning do conflict is generally known; for we continually observe that what one logician endeavours to establish as perfect knowledge is demolished by another, who, in his turn, is treated alike by a third. How, therefore, can knowledge, which is founded on reasoning, and whose object is not something permanently uniform, be perfect knowledge?... The Veda, which is eternal and the source of knowledge, may be allowed to have for its object firmly established things, and hence the perfection of that knowledge which is founded on the Veda cannot be denied by any of the logicians of the past, present or future... Our final position therefore is, that *on the ground of scripture and of reasoning subordinate to scripture*[14] the intelligent Brahman is to be considered the cause and substance of the world.'[15]

12 *BSB*. 2.1.1 referred to by Lacombe, o.c. 223, n. 5.

13 This may have been taken from Bhartṛhari: See J.F. Staal in: *Philosophy East and West*, 10 (1960), 53-7.

14 *Āgamavaśenāgamānusāritarkavaśenāca*.

15 *BSB*. 2.1.11 transl. Thibaut, Oxford, 1890, Cf. also the often quoted passage: 'Even a hundred *śrutis*, declaring fire to be cold and without light, cannot prove authoritative': *Gītābhāṣya* 18.66 ap. T.M.P. Mahadevan, *Gauḍapāda: A Study in Early Advaita*, Madras 1954, 80, n. 5 and S.K. Belvalkar, Basu Mallik Lectures on Vedanta Philosophy I, Poona 1929, 17, note.

Thus the relation between the two *pramāṇas*, *śabda* and *pratyakṣa* is as follows: *pratyakṣa* informs us about the sensible realm, *śabda* (and only *śabda*) about the suprasensible. For instance: 'The Lord, about whom ordinary experience tells us nothing, is to be considered as the special topic of all scriptural passages', whereas it is on the other hand said with reference to the *jīva*: 'It is not the primary purport of scripture to make statements regarding the individual soul'.[16]

The metaphysical ground for the belief in authority and for traditionalism is the conviction that time passes from higher to lower, that the ideal was in the beginning and that development is degeneration. Then it becomes desirable to attempt to restore the original situation, to try to live up to it and hence to accept its scriptures as infallible authority. This conviction exists in the idea of the four *yugas*, the purest, *Satya yuga*, in the beginning, the basest, *Kali yuga*, at the end. Combined with the idea of perpetual *saṁsāra*[17] the belief of ever recurrent world cycles (*manvantaras*) arises, as it is found in the Purāṇas and existed for Śaṅkara. In the Vedas, the belief in a gradual deterioration of time does not occur and neither does a looking up at an ideal original situation, nor traditionalism and belief in authority prevail. Later, the belief in evolution came to be expressed in the idea of *sarvamukti*.[18]

Notwithstanding the relative stress on *śabda* in a discussion of the value of the *pramāṇas*, it cannot be said that Advaita is ultimately based upon *śruti* in the same way as Mīmāṁsā. For ultimately the *śabdapramāṇa* is unreal, as we will see below. Ultimately for Advaita one's own plenary experience *anubhava* counts and produces the conviction that the Advaitic doctrines are true.[19] This had already been the thesis of Gauḍapāda,[20] who also stressed

16 1.3.7. Thibaut's translation ('It is nowhere the purpose of scripture to make statements regarding the individual soul') is not justifiable on the basis of the succinct expression of the text: *tasyāvivakṣitatvāt*.

17 See below II, 3.

18 See below II, 14.

19 See below II, 7: 88-9.

20 See Mahadevan, *Gauḍapāda*. Chap. III. 77-88.

the independent value of reasoning.[21] In this spirit Ānandagiri says in his gloss on Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā* with an unambiguous reference to Mīmāṁsā, about a person who possesses *anubhava*: 'Such an enlightened person does not become a bondslave of the Veda. The meaning that he gives of the Veda, that alone becomes the meaning of the Veda'.[22]

1. *Scripture*: *śruti and smṛti*

A few well known facts, to be constantly referred to below, will be mentioned here. The term *śruti* ('what is heard'), denotes the revelation received by the seers (*ṛṣis*) and handed over by them to their descendants who did not receive any direct revelation.[23] Being itself not of human or personal origin (*apauruṣeya*), it consists of the *mantras* (*saṃhitās*), the *brāhmaṇas*, the *āraṇyakas* and the *upaniṣads*. The *smṛti* ('what is remembered'), which is of human origin but inspired by the texts of the *śruti*, consists for example of the *sūtras*[24] along with the *Darśana* literature, *vedāṇgas, upavedas, dharmaśāstras, itihāsas* and *purāṇas*.[25]

The doctrine of the superhuman, impersonal origin of the Veda (*apauruṣeyatva*), stressing the principal difference between *śruti* and *smṛti* as between direct experience and memory, is the Mīmāṁsā doctrine and was rejected for instance by the Naiyāyikas who held the Veda to be the work of *Īśvara* and therefore *pauruṣeya*. The position of Advaita is that the Vedas are *apauruṣeya* but nevertheless the work of *Īśvara*, who is the Absolute conditioned by *māyā*.[26] The Naiyāyika reasoning does not hold, as any utterance by a person need not be *paurunṣeya*: the *guru* for instance utters knowledge which is *apauruṣeya*, as there is

21 See above p. 32, n. 15.
22 II. 30 ap. Mahadevan, *Gauḍapāda*, 88.
23 See *Nirukta* 1.20, where it is stated that 'duty (*dharma*) revealed itself to the *ṛṣis*, who handed it down by oral instruction to their descendants, to whom *dharma* did not manifest itself', (V.S. Ghate, *Lectures on the Ṛgveda*, Poona, 23).
24 Wrongly classified under *śruti* by J. Masui and R. Daumal in their 'Survey of the development of the Hindu tradition'. (*Approches de l'Inde*, Paris 1949, 28-29).
25 Cf. T.M.P. Mahadevan, Outlines of Hinduism, Bombay 1956, 31 sq.
26 See below II, 14.

‘contingence of personal origin through the succession of teachers’.[27] Accordingly, *apauruṣeyatva* ‘consists in the fact that the Vedas in this creation are exactly like those in the previous creation and so on without beginning’.[28] According to the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*: ‘in the initial period of creation Parameśvara created the Veda with the same sequence as the sequence of the Veda existent in earlier creation, but not a Veda of a kind different from that....’.[29]

It seems that the Vedāntic view concerning the superhuman character of the Veda finds more support in the text of the Ṛgveda itself than the Nyāya view. There are references to knowledge supernaturally communicated or favours divinely conferred on Vaśiṣṭa and on Viśvāmitra. Sometimes the divine speech (*vāk*) is described as having entered into the *ṛṣis*, whereas a miraculous power is attributed to their prayers. Ghate who gathered these references concludes therefore that ‘it is quite clear that some of the ancient *ṛṣis* entertained a belief, though, no doubt, indistinct and hesitating, in their own inspiration.’[30] Thus, the words of the Veda were ‘expired’ by Brahman and immediately observed (‘heard’ - cf. *śruti*: ‘seen’ - cf. *ṛṣi*) by the ‘inspired’ sages.[31]

This impersonal and superhuman ‘sacred knowledge’ (*veda*) consists in the *saṁhitā* portions mainly of hymns, prayers and ritual formulas. The object to be secured is not *mokṣa* (release, as in the Vedāntic systems) or even *svarga* (heaven, as in the Pūrva Mīmāṁsā), but ‘a long life for full hundred years, prosperity, warlike offspring, in short, all pleasures of this earth. Conquest of enemies, freedom from diseases, abundance of food and drink seem to be the happiest ideal which the Vedic *ṛṣis* placed before themselves’.[32] When sacrifice is introduced how-

27 *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* 4.54.
28 Ghate, o.c. 114.
29 *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* 4.55. Cf. J.F. Staal, *Nambudiri Veda Recitation*, 's-Gravenhage 1961, 11.
30 Ghate, o.c. 116. Cf. also L. Renou in: Etudes Védiques et Pāṇinéennes I, Paris 1955, 1-27.
31 L. Renou-J. Filliozat, *L'Inde classique* I, Paris 1947, 270.
32 Ghate, o.c. 126. - Some interpret the Veda exclusively in a spiritual sense, e.g., Śrī Aurobindo, who interprets, e.g. *ṛta* as ‘Spiritual, interior truth’; the frequent go not as cow but in the first place as light ray and then as a ray of knowledge; *ghṛta* not as ghee, but as light and hence as mystical light (in his Introduction to: *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, Pondicherry 1946). Cf. also the defence of Aurobindo's view against modern scholarship, Sāyaṇa and Mīmāṁsā by T.V. Kapali Sastri, *Lights on the Veda*, Pondicherry 1946. - For an evaluation of this view see below p. 42, n. 54.

ever, the above aim undergoes, as we will see, a certain modification.

The Brāhmaṇas are in particular concerned with the sacrifice or ritual act (*karma*) par excellence, which we will consider below. The Āraṇyakas form the transition to the Upaniṣads, which represent the *jñānamārga*, 'way of knowledge', in opposition to the *karmamārga*, 'way of action'. The respective portions of the Vedic literature are accordingly called *karmakāṇḍa* and *jñānakāṇḍa*. But this Vedāntic distinction is not accepted by Mīmāṁśā, which looks upon the Veda as *karmakāṇḍa* only. The road which (according to Advaita) having started with the recitation of the *mantras*, leads from action to knowledge, goes via meditation (*upāsanā*), as could be seen for instance from the parallelism which is sometimes established between the four parts of the *śruti* and the four stages of life (*āśrama*): the student, *brahmacārī* has to recite the *mantras*; the householder, *gṛhastha*, has to perform the actions and rites as prescribed mainly in the Brāhmaṇas; the forest-dweller, *vānaprastha*, has to perform meditations as dealt with in the forest books, Āraṇyakas; and the *saṁnyāsin's* task is to find the ultimate knowledge (*jñāna*). Mīmāṁsā accordingly rejects *saṁnyāsa*. But in Advaita, since knowledge is unconnected with *karma* or meditation, one can at any time go beyond the *āśramas*[33] and become a *saṁnyāsin* who is *atyāśramin*. This is a typically Advaitic view, which is for instance expressed in the *Mahābhārata* in the 'dialogue between father and son', where the father represents the orthodox view, that renunciation should come at the end of the *āśrama* discipline, whereas the son wants to take up *saṁnyāsa* immediately.[34] Śaṅkara himself became according to tradition a *saṁnyāsin* at an early age

33 Originally (e.g. in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*) a division into three *āśramas* existed, to which later (*Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*) a fourth and highest stage was added for the person who is beyond the *āśramas* (*atyāśramin*), to be called subsequently *saṁnyāsin*, 'who has renounced' (*Maitryupaniṣad; Dharmasūtra*) (Renou-Filliozat, o.c., 379).

34 See M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, London 1932, 21.

(as still do his successors in the four *maṭhas*).[35] The Nambudiri Mīmāṁsakas of his community disapproved of this. On the other hand, the legendary conversion of the Mīmāṁsaka, Maṇḍana Miśra, to Advaita[36] is expressed in his taking up of *saṁnyāsa* under the new name Sureśvara.

This short description shows that the Upaniṣads, the *jñānakāṇḍa*, constitute the most important source for all later philosophical systems, which each in their own way aim at knowledge besides the other aim, especially stressed by some, i.e. release (there is in Advaita a close connection between the two). But it should not be forgotten that this knowledge is in fact the successor of meditation, so that the later generations were facing two possibilities: either to accept these results as *apauruṣeya*, revelation, faithful and dogmatic, as authority; or, to perform again the original existential act and arrive at the same knowledge by performing themselves the meditation as prescribed in the text, i.e., meditating on the basis of the text, not 'freely'. Thus the *apauruṣeya* experience of the ancient seers is utilised, but personally regained.

The old duality *karma-jñāna* corresponds among the later *darśanas* (viewpoints, rather than systems)[37], to the two-fold aim: *dharma* and *brahma* of (Pūrva) Mīmāṁsā and Vedānta respectively. The proper denomination, *pūrva* and *uttara mīmāṁsā* is more instructive. Mīmāṁsā is a term derived from the root *man*-, 'to think' (cf. *manas*). This derivative has the function of desire and intensification; *mīmāṁsā* could therefore be translated as 'attempt an intense reflection'. In both cases this refers to meditation which will lead to (Mūmāṁsā) or which will have to make place for (Advaita) knowledge. The difference is gradual: Pūrva Mīmāṁsā means the first, the earlier, the previous meditation (a denomination given, of course, by the Vedāntins expressing their advancement with regard to the Mīmāṁsakas); Uttara Mīmāṁsā

35 See below II 13: 139. Suka was born a *saṁnyāsin*. The head of the Advaitic *maṭha* must be a *brahmacārī* even before the installation; the heads of the Rāmānuja or Madhva *maṭhas* may have been *gṛhasthas* and celibacy is enjoined only after installation: Cf. V. Krishnaswami, *Swami in Kanchi*, Madras 1957, 13.

36 See below II, 8 94 with n. 270.

37 See R. Guénon, *Introduction générale à l'étude des doctrines hindoues*, Part III, Chap. 8: 'Les points de vue de la doctrine', Paris, 1932, 213-222.

means the ultimate, final meditation. When it is said that Pūrva Mīmāṁsā deals with the interpretation of acts and rituals as prescribed in the Veda (especially in the Brāhmanas) and Vedānta with pure knowledge, it should not be forgotten that the link between the two is the act of meditation. The reflection on texts dealing with sacrifice in the Pūrva Mīmāṁsā can be intensified and become a meditation which will ultimately be replaced by the highest knowledge. The word *dharma* as occurring in the first *sūtra* of Jaimini's *Mīmāṁsāsūtra*: 'Then therefore the enquiry into *dharma*' (*athāto dharmajijñāsā*) refers to the religious duties and acts to be performed; their study can be looked upon as a first meditation. The ultimate meditation, however, will make place for the knowing of the Absolute itself, and thus it is but natural that Bādarāyana's *Brahmasūra* begins with: 'Then therefore the enquiry into Brahman' (*athāto brahmajijñāsā*).

Terms like *jñāna* (also *vidyā*) cannot be simply identified with Western terms like knowledge, Erkenntnis, connaissance or even *gnōsis* (though the Gnostic use of the latter term resembles the Vedātic usage of the Sanskrit term). They have to be understood in their context and against the background of the sacrifice, of which they are, as it were, an interiorisation in a particular way to be specified below. Thus Sénart could translate the term *vidyā* and its counterpart *avidyā*, as they occur in the *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, by 'magical efficiency of knowledge and inefficiency of its contrary'.[38]

We are now in a position to see: (1) that *śruti* and *smṛti* are related to each other as immediate experience and mediate memory; (2) that the second depends on the first in such a way that *smṛti* as 'second-hand (human) exposition of the (divine) inspiration', can become 'memory' through a meditation or reflection and thus become knowledge, i.e., first-hand knowledge, comparable to the original immediate experience of the sages; (3) therefore that knowledge as used in this context is derived from a meditation on a revealed text, in such a way that the derived knowledge rises to the level of the original knowledge.[39]

38 *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, ed. et. transl. E. Sénart, Paris 1930, 142.

39 The relation *śruti-smṛti* can also be compared to *pratyaksa-anumāna*: Sankara interprets the latter terms, when occurring in a *sūtra*, several times as denoting the former.

We see, therefore, that where there seemed to be an unbridgeable gap between human and divine knowledge, a closer analysis shows that there is in fact continuity, the reason being that *smṛti* 'memory', becomes knowledge, when the original knowledge, which constituted *śruti*, is regained. There are texts, where this fundamental and cognitive aspect of 'memory' is stressed; some are collected by Coomaraswamy.[40] We may quote as an example the *Chādogyopaniṣad*: 'Memory is from the Self' (*ātmatah smaraḥ*).[41] There are traces in Buddhist literature too. In the *Dīgha Nikāya* it is said that the Gods fall from heaven only when their 'memory fails and they are of confused memory'.[42]

If meditation on a revealed text leads to a knowledge comparable to that which was possessed by the seers of the revealed text, we find here announced a very interesting doctrine which combines infallible authority with independent philosophical reflection.

There seems to be no justification in *śruti* itself, which directly enjoins that one should attempt to regain the original knowledge. The term *vidhi*[43] means injunction, formula, precept, especially (in the Brāhmanas) the injunction for the performance of a rite, a ritual act or sacrifice, as for instance injunctions of the form: *yajeta*, 'he ought to sacrifice', *kuryāt*, 'he ought to perform'. This is further developed in Mimāṁsā. While Advaita accepts the Mīmāṁsaka interpretation of *vidhi*, it lays more stress on the *jñāna* aspect, as we shall see below.

2. *Concepts of continuity. Karman*

An analysis of the duality of *śruti* and *smṛti* leads to a recognition of the continuity which exists between the two. Likewise it was seen that the ritual act can be gradually 'interiorised' and can lead to meditation and subsequently to immediate knowledge.

40 A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Recollection: Indian and Platonic*, Suppl. to the Journal of the American Oriental Society 1944, 1-18. It remains questionable whether the author is right in his identification of *smṛti* with the Platonic *anámnēsis*. Cf. below III, 4, 188. Memory is also required for memorizing *śruti*: Cf. Staal, *Nambudiri Veda Recitation*, 15, *passim*.

41 7, 26.1. ap. Coomaraswamy, o.c. 3.

42 I. 19-22, ap. id. 7.

43 M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford 1951, s.v.

Meditation on a sacred text, originally a matter of interpretative reflection and elucidation (in Pūrva Mīmāṁsā) develops gradually into a meditation on the Absolute itself and into knowledge of or identity with the Absolute (in Uttara Mīmāṁsā). The common factor of all these developments is the element of *continuity*, a characteristic of early Indian thought.

It is a primary tendency of man to experience himself as an everlasting and indestructible entity.[44] The belief in immortality of the soul, the reluctance to accept death, the immortalization of kings (e.g., amongst the old Egyptians), of heroes, of sages, of saints, and later of everybody, but also the urge of modern man to preserve and continue his personality are some of the manifestations of this. So are the negative counterparts: the fear to die, to be dissolved or destroyed. In all ancient[45] civilisations this desire for continuity is projected (in a more than psychological sense) outside upon the external world, which is in its entirety perceived as a continuum. In ancient India this tendency must have been exceptionally strong, as can be seen from many facts. Betty Heimann, who noted this, speaks of a certain constancy ('Konstanz') and explains this in the light of the richness of tropical vegetation.[46] In the light of the fact that the first achievements of ancient Indians took place in the plain of the Ganges or still further towards the North West, where there was no exuberance of tropical vegetation, it seems preferable to accept this simply as a human tendency which is general and which seems to have especially developed in India for reasons which are unknown to us.

Three examples of this preponderance of ideas about continuity and preservation may be given, which are each instructive in themselves. They are connected with three important terms: *ṛta, annam* and *karman*.

44 E. Neumann, *Ursprungsgeschichte des Bewusstseins*, Zürich 1949, 242: 'Grundtendenz im Menschen, sich als ein Bleibendes und Unzerstōrbares zu erfahren'.

45 A term to be preferred to primitive, primordial un(der)developed, in which a certain unjustified evaluation is implied.

46 B. Heimann, *Studien zur Eigenart indischen Denkens*, Tübingen 1930, 146, sq. Cf. also F.D.K. Bosch, *De gouden kiem*, Haarlem 1945. The discontinuous in Indian thought, especially in Buddhism, is the special subject of the work by L. Silburn, *Instant et cause*, Paris 1955.

The most important of the general or all-encompassing (it may be doubted whether it is appropriate to speak here about ‘abstract’)[47] concepts of the Veda is *ṛta*,[48] a supra-divine force (though in particular connected with Varuṇa) expressing a kind of general order, cosmic, ritual as well as moral. Ghate discriminates[49] (the modern mind must discriminate and dissolve when dealing with the unity in meaning of such archaic concepts) the following developments of these three meanings: (1) *ṛta* regulates the alternations of the seasons and of day and night, in short of all the recurrences of natural phenomena (which are, it may be remarked, of special importance in an agricultural society - something to be accounted for when we arrive at a general idea of who and what the original ‘Aryans’ were - and which are typical for the Indian climate with its regularly recurrent monsoons). *Ṛta* gives birth to the Gods too. (2) From this(?) it comes to signify the correctness and the regularity of the cult or sacrifice; the ritual acts are conducted by *ṛta*[50]. (3) It then denotes the moral law which every righteous man must observe.

The postulate of continuity explains how such a unifying term for order or law, a link between a variety of phenomena, could come into existence. A term like *ṛta* would not have any definite meaning and would be merely confusing if this belief in continuity were not to exist in the background. This unity of denotation exists in the idea of order and presupposes the idea of continuity.

Secondly, the term *annam* clearly shows the continuity which exists between the material and the psychical and spiritual. This unity is difficult for the modern mind to understand. But after the increasing dualism of body and soul in modern philosophy since Descartes, which led to nothing but insoluble problems and insurmountable difficulties, there is again a tendency in philosophy to accept the unity of body and soul and the identity of the material, psychical and spiritual.[51] This is a return - in a way which is more justified than ever (i.e., on a phenomenological basis) -

47 Renou-Filliozat, o.c. 329.
48 Cf. the Avestan *aša*.
49 o.c. 144 sq.
50 See e.g., J.C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, 's-Gravenhage 1957.
51 See e.g. J.-P. Sartre, *L'êre et le néant*, Paris 1943, 368-427; ‘Le corps’ (troisi ème partie, chapitre II).

to the traditional view, itself a development of the archaic view as it existed in ancient India and as it is for instance manifest in the term *annam*. *Annam*, from the root *ad*-, 'to eat', means food. Nothing is as continuous as eating; food is continuously eaten, digested and absorbed, throughout the life of each individual. Moreover, the desire for a continuation of eating is one of the most basic desires. Before this phenomenon had become unconscious and self-evident, it must have been an important conscious element, drawing the full attention of human beings. In that period of human development it must have been looked upon as a ready basis for many analogies. Under such circumstance *annam* could mean 'Everything which is eaten, digested and transformed on the fundamental basis of transformation'.[52] Subsequently it became an equivalent of the later concept of substance. Betty Heimann has shown by analysing several Upaniṣadic texts,[53] that the term points at a universal belief in transformation, a continuous transformation from everything into everything. That this should not be interpreted in an exclusively spiritual way is evident. But that there is, on the other hand, not even a preponderance of the material aspect (both errors result from habits of thought of the period of philosophy from Descartes to Kant)[54] can be easily seen from a text like *Chāndogyopaniṣad* 6.5.1: 'When absorbed, the food (*annam*) is transformed into three portions: the most gross elements become the excrements (*purīsa*) the middle become flesh (*māṁsa*); the most subtle become spirit (*manas*)'.

52 B. Heimann in: The Journal of Oriental Research (Madras) 23 (1954) 8 sq.

53 CU 6. 5.1; 6, 7.1; Ait. Up. 2.1 sq.; BAU. 1.2.11 sq; 2.5.1 sq. ap. Id. 8-10.

54 Thus as well a spiritualistic as a materialistic monism fails: Sri Aurobindo (see above p. 35, n. 32) as well as W. Ruben, *Die Philosophen der Upanishaden*, Bern, 1947, who identified the whole realm of denotations of a trem like *annam* exclusively with the material, which was convincingly refuted by Betty Heimann, o.c. (Cf. also L. Renou, *Religions of Ancient India*, London,. 1953, 17). It is instructive to observe how as well a convinced materialist as a great spiritualist can err when facing archaic undifferentiated unities of entities where we are used to discriminate. In such cases the all too often blamed spirit of detached scholarly research, if undogmatic even in its method, is beneficial.
For Ruben's book, see also the review by P. Hacker, Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenl'dndischen Gesellschaft 100 (1950) 393-398.

Since *annam* had a very general significance it could become extremely important and central, connected with the fundamental phenomena of life and death and of life-giving breath (*prāṇa*; cf. *ātman* - both concepts which manifest too the unseparatedness of material and spiritual). We read for instance: 'It is food that is called exhaling and inhaling; it is food that is called life and death. It is food that Brahmins call growing old; it is food which is called procreation'.[55] Similarly the ultimate concept, Brahman, is identified with food.[56]

Annam as food is not an image denoting phenomena of transformation in general, but denotes substance which is the principle of any transformation. Analogous terms are also utilised, for instance the term *bhoktṛ*, 'enjoyer of the food', which has become a very important term in later philosophy, denoting the experiencer in general. The concept also occurs in Śaṅkara: 'The highest self, when reabsorbing the entire aggregate of effects may be said to eat everything' (when commenting upon the *sūtra*: 'The eater (is the highest self) since what is movable and what is immovable is mentioned (as his food))'.[57]

This symbolism of eating and food (which is not only Indian, but occurs for instance in the Christian eucharist)[58] has reached a kind of existence in the human mind, though sometimes in the unconscious layer where modern psychology discovered it. The importance of eating and of food is manifest from the fact that sexual symbolism as discovered by Sigmund Freud, is preceeded by a more fundamental symbolism, namely that of food and of its digestion. Also in the struggle for life the urge for food is stronger than the urge for sexual satisfaction. In the footsteps of Jung, Neumann has shown that the concept of eating can express living as well as the general idea of possessing power. There are numerous references to this, old Egyptian for instance as well as Indian,[59] where food is described as the entire content of the world and

55 Taittirīya Brāhmana II, 8.8. 3 ap. H. Oldenberg, *Dis Weltanschauung der Brahmana-Texte*, Gōttingen 1919, 42, n. 4.
56 *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.2.1.
57 *BSB*. 1.2.9.
58 See Matthew 26.26; 'And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said: Take, eat; this is my body'.
59 o.c. 40 sq.

hunger as the negation of everything, as destruction and death (which actually it can be). The same ideas are traceable in contemporary dreams. In the historical process there is a development towards spiritualization or interiorisation; to eat and to digest the world becomes to conquer the world and lastly to be beyond 'this world'. In case of the Gods, to eat the world comes to mean to withdraw or to dissolve it,[60] and philosophers interpret this in a purified terminology as a 'reabsorption of the entire aggregate of effects' (Śaṅkara). This occurs in archaic world views as well as in contemporary dream material, whereas it can be shown to possess a special significance for the child in an early stage of its development. To this conceptual realm belong breath, hunger, thirst, semen, excrement, breasts, sweat, spitting, teeth, etc.[61]

One might wonder whether any philosophical significance can be attached to this. The answer is in the affirmative and the significance might be formulated as follows. Originally in human being (and still in us, although often as a hidden background) a unity of different entities existed, which the progress of consciousness (which means repeated bifurcations through negation) split up in parts some of which were more highly evaluated than others. Then the tension which is typical for consciousness comes into being, and errors arise when the mind starts reflecting and identifying the original whole with one of the parts which have come out of it. The mind is unable to regain the fundamental unity which is at the back of such partition. To understand archaic concepts like *ṛta* and *annam* we would have to abandon the multiplicity which has arisen in the meantime through further developments and refinements, not by a synthesis of the manifold, but by an endeavour to see the continuous background of the whole.

Perhaps the boldest generalisation of ancient India is the idea of *karma*.[62] This word denoted originally the ritual act, which established identity or continuity, or at any rate a link between the

60 *Ait. Up.* 2.1; *Tait. Up.* 2.2; 3.2; *Muṇḍ. Up.* 1.1.8; *Maitrāyaṇa Up.* 6.9.1; *BAU.* 1.1.1; 1.2.5 ap. Neumann, o.c. 41-43.

61 See Neumann, o.c. Index s.v.

62 See Renou-Filliozat, o.c. 341-342; 555-558; Heimann, o.c. 32-35; Oldenberg, o.c. 162; J. Gonda *Inleiding tot het Indische denken* 53-60.

performer of the sacrifice and his aim (see below). Later it came, to be applied to moral activity and to its results. It retained its function of re-establishing a continuity, applied in this case to human life in its duration as a whole. Thus it filled the gap before birth and after death, and took the shape of a rational causal element explaining the ancient doctrine of rebirth or *saṃsāra*. Man is supposed to dissolve at the moment of his death, but 'his' (and the meaning of a possessive pronoun becomes questionable in such cases where the possessor has ceased to be) *karman* is the indestructible substance which survives him and causes a new birth determined by good or bad acts of a previous existence.

This doctrine of *karman* offers a solution for the discontinuous and therefore unintelligible elements of human existence and it explains at the same time the existence of suffering, solving the problem of the 'theodices' (bound to arise, as we will see, especially in such world views as the Christian). The doctrine of *karman* need not, as it is sometimes said (referring to its identity with destiny as expressed in terms like *niyata, vidhi*, or *diṣṭa*, 'fixed, settled', etc.) destroy human freedom,[63] because every human being, though born in a particular situation and provided with a determinate karmic inheritance, can in his life freely accumulate good or bad *karman*.[64] Advaita develops this in its own way, as we shall see.[65]

It follows from this idea of strict causality in human life, where a kind of equivalent to the law of preservation of energy holds (which the Western mind does not accept in the spiritual realm, because of the idea of creativity) that *karman* is conceived as something close to *annam*. On the other hand, it preserves the idea of a universal law in its causality, cosmic as well as individual. Here it turns out to be the proper heir to the ancient *ṛta*. The *karman* substance belongs again to the realm where physical and mental are not separated. Thus, *karman* is assimilated to the current of

63 As the Ājīvikas did.

64 As such its general structure is not so very different from the structure of freedom in the existentialism of Heidegger. *Entschlossenheit* (resolution, decision, decisiveness) is stressed, but on the basis of and in conflict with the *in-die-Welt-geworfen-sein*, 'to-be-thrown-in-the-World'.

65 See below II. 14.

a river, to the shadow which follows man,[66] or again to the food, in particular specified as its undigested portion.

The ritual background of *karman* is never lost in the later developments of its meaning; and there may be even an element of magic or witchcraft always distinguishable in it. A psychological or mental tendency must have been associated with it from the early beginning, as we can see from the root *kr*- itself, which can be applied to *manas* with the meaning: ‘to direct the thoughts or the mind’ (occurring since the Ṛgveda) and later also connected with *buddhi*, etc.[67]

The idea of *karman* has remained a central idea and dogma of Hinduism, (as S.N. Dasgupta frankly admitted) probably mainly as the rational expression of the notion of *saṁsāra*.[68] It becomes an all-powerful principle on which also the Gods depend. Apart from explaining social inequality and providing a metaphysical basis and therefore justification for the caste-system, it is a kind of general theory of heredity, which applies to character, intelligence, behaviour and physique.[69] Its fruitfulness in the field of psychology was especially great:[70] the *saṁskāras* (a term derived from the same root *kṛ*-), the impressions left in the mind from previous experience, particularly during a former life, are forerunners of what modern psychology calls determinants (determining factors) of the unconscious. It can even be said that with the ‘collective unconsciousnesses’ of C.G. Jung (however questionable as yet the status may be of this philosophically unclarified and problematic concept) we are no more so far removed from an interpretation of the theories of reincarnation.

66 Notice a curious prefiguration of *Schatten* (shadow), a technical term in the psychology of C.G. Jung, denoting an important factor of personal unconsciousness, constituting a kind of complement to the conscious personality and consisting of dark ‘shadows’ and ‘shades’ and of obscure, generally unrecognised or oppressed, tendencies. The karmic influences are in particular those which we would nowadays call activities of the unconscious, so that the connection is not unexpected. Cf. also the term *saṁskāra*, ‘residual impression’, which could be compared with the mechanism of Jung's archetypes.

67 Monier-Williams' dictionary s.v.

68 Concerning the historical problem, see below II, 3.51.

69 Renou-Filliozat, o.c. 557.

70 See above n. 66.

In the doctrine of *karman* the tendency towards the establishment or re-establishment of continuity has found a rational expression, especially on account of its causal structure. Its rationality makes this doctrine universally intelligible and popular even in the West.[71] But we have to investigate further into its background. We shall find a causality which is much more universal and tends towards identifications of special sets of particulars. Of this, the karmic causation constitutes only the most intelligible and rational portion. This will be seen in the next sections, dealing with identifications and with sacrifice. Sacrifice will lead to the act of meditation.

3. *Karman - Samsāra - Transmigration*

We shall now consider a few problems connected with *karman* and *saṁsāra* as discussed mainly in Buddhism and in Advaita Vedānta. Such considerations do not concern us only as history, but they investigate the background of self-evidence, which is often the determining factor of purely metaphysical doctrines.

The Indian doctrine of *karman* was accepted in Buddhism as *kammagāda*[72] or *kirtavāda*.[73] Buddhism sought to avoid two extremes: (1) the view that 'all that a being suffers from or experiences is due to the sum totals of his deeds in the past;' (2) the view that 'all that a being experiences in this life is only a matter

71 Cf. C. Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, I. London 1954, Iv. n.3; 'Several other Europeans of eminence have let their mind play with the ideas of metempsychosis, pre-existence and *karma*, as for instance Giordano Bruno, Swedenborg, Goethe, Lessing, Lavater, Harder, Schopenhauer, Ibsen, von Helmont, Lichtenberg and in England such different spirits as Hume and Wordsworth. It would appear that towards the end of the eighteenth century these ideas were popular in some literary circles on the continent. See Bertholet, *The Transmigration of Souls*, pp. 111 ff. Recently Prof. McTaggart has argued in favour of the doctrine with great lucidity and persuasiveness. Huxley too did not think it absurd... As Deussen observes, Kant's argument of the moral law, attainable only by an infinite process of approximation, points to transmigration rather than immortality in the usual sense'. As for Deussen's interpretation of Kant, it might be suggested that there is more connection with the Christian idea of Purgatory. - As for the Greeks see below III, 1: 165.

72 *Kamma* is the Pali equivalent of the Sanskrit *karma*.

73 Cf. for the following B.C. Law, *Concepts of Buddhism*, Amsterdam 1937, Chapter IX.

of chance.'[74] It has succeeded in avoiding these by stressing the possibility of freedom, by making the ancient Hindu doctrine more explicit. It is pointed out for instance in the *Mahāniddesa*[75] 'that a man need not be afraid of the vast accumulation of karma through a long cycle of births and rebirths. For considered from the point of view of the mind the whole of such accumulation may be completely undone by a momentary action of mind. Mind is in its own place and as such can make and unmake all such accumulations of *karma*.'

Accordingly, *karman* becomes *cetanā*, 'volition', and Buddhaghosa defines it as 'volition expressed in action.'[76] The result constitutes the substance which is the cause of another existence, but in a very general and impersonal way. The more individual *khandhas*, which originated in the past as consequences of actions (volitions), have ceased to be. In actual existence other *khandhas* arise out of the consequences of past deeds, but they are destroyed too. In another existence others will be produced from those in this existence, not a single condition will pass on to the next existence.[77]

The Buddhists do not believe in a theory of transmigration of the individual soul: 'It goes without saying,' says Law,[78] 'that the Buddhist thinker repudiates the action of the passing of the ego from an embodiment to an embodiment.' 'With the Buddhist, rebirth is to be considered as *kammasantati* or the continuity of an impulse.'[79] This is still more evident from a text of the *Śālistamba sūtra*.[80] 'There is no element which migrates from this world to the other; but there is recognition (realisation) of the fruition of *karma*, as there is continuity of causes and conditions. It is not as it were that one, dropping out from this world, is born into another, but there is continuity of causes and conditions.'

74 It may be remarked here, that this excludes an 'unphilosophical' monotheistic doctrine, i.e., that 'all what a being experiences is due to the will of God.'
75 I. 117-118 ap. Law, o.c. 56.
76 *Atthasālinī* 88, ap. Id. 57.
77 *Viśuddhimagga* II. 603 ap. id, 58.
78 Id. 45.
79 Id. 46.
80 Quoted in T.R.V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London 1956, 33.

This conclusion should not be looked upon as a philosophical addition to the Buddha's teachings, which never deal, as some say, with metaphysics; for the Buddha is sometimes expressed to have 'rigorously eschewed all theoretical considerations as vain.' But this is not true.[81] The same idea can be found in less philosophical, but perhaps more suggestive language in a parable from the Milindapanha.[82]

Said the king: 'Bhante Nagasena, does rebirth take place without anything transmigrating?' - 'Yes, your majesty, rebirth takes place without anything transmigrating', - 'How, Bhante Nagasena, does rebirth take place without anything transmigrating? Give an illustration'. - 'Suppose, your majesty, a man were to light a light from another light; pray, would the one light have passed over to the other light?' - 'Nay, verily, Bhante'. - 'In exactly the same way, your majesty, does rebirth take place without anything transmigrating.'

Thus with Buddhism we are back in the realm of the original Vedic idea of *karman* as universal causality and continuity.

What has Śaṅkara to say to this? He may be expected to uphold the Brahmanical *ātmavāda* as against the Buddhist *anātmavāda*. Let us consider his view more closely.

There are many passages in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* where views concerning 'life after death' are put forward, which seem to leave no doubt about the implicit conviction of Śaṅkara that there is a continuity of the ego after death. This seems to be evident, for instance, from the treatment of the Upaniṣadic *pitṛyāṇa* and *devayāṇa*. Especially in the *Chāndogya* but also in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*[83] at least two possible destinies for the individual soul after death are mentioned. Some souls ascend, passing through divisions of time and astral bodies, up to Brahman and attain release (*devayāṇa*, the path of the gods, or *archirmārga*, the bright way); others ascend only partially and have to return to the earth (*pitṛyāṇa*, the path of the fathers, or *dhūmamārga*, the dark way). Those who follow the *pitṛyāṇa* do not pass beyond the sphere of

81 Murti, o.c. 29-31 and Chapter 11.
82 From H.C. Warren, *Buddhism in translations*. Cambridge Mass. 1947, 334; Cf. 234-241.
83 *CU*. 4.15. 5-6; 5.10. 3-7; *BAU*. 6.2.16.

the moon (cf. *candramāsaṃ jyotiḥ* in the *Gītā*[84]) which signifies according to Guénon[85] that these souls remain invested with bodies and therefore remain individual; the others transcend the sublunary world and are beyond all form and individuality.

The superiority of knowledge to works, which is a characteristic doctrine of Advaita,[86] is manifest in the interpretation that *pitṛyāṇa* is for those who have attained right knowledge. Śaṅkara interprets the verses of the *Gītā* referring to this as follows: 'Those who die, having been engaged in the contemplation of Brahman, reach Brahman by this path' (i.e. *devayāṇā*);[87] whereas by the other path (*pitṛyāṇa*) 'the Yogin - the *karmin* who performs sacrifices (to Gods) and other works - attains to the lunar light, and on the exhaustion thereof, returns again to earth.'[88]

In the commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*, however, in 4.3.7-14, Śaṅkara holds the view that Brahman which is attained as goal of the *devayāṇā* is not the highest Brahman, or, let us say (anticipating a future discussion of the doctrine of the 'two' Brahmans), is not the real Brahman. Then who is to reach the real Brahman, and how?

The answer cannot be provided at this level of knowledge and thinking, which is capable only of attaining a lower insight according to Śaṅkara. If there is higher a Brahman which can be attained in some way, there must also be a higher knowledge which refers to it. Here we see the origin of the doctrine of *parabrahman* and *aparabrahman* to which correspond respectively *paravidyā* and *aparavidyā*. Deussen, who speaks in this connection about an exoteric and an esoteric eschatology,[89] describes Śaṅkara' system as a combination of both. But the term combina-

84 *BG*. 8.25.
85 R. Guénon, *L'homme et son devenir selen le Védānta*, Paris 1947, Chapitre XXI.
86 See below II. 6-8.
87 Ad *BG*. 8.24; transl. A. Mahadeva Sastry, Madras, 1947, 235.
88 Ad *BG*. 8.25; transl. *ibid*.
89 Deussen, o.c. Chapter XXIX, Section 2 (358-359). All the three terms, exoteric, esoteric and eschatology, breathe too much of a Christian or at any rate not Indian atmosphere and should not be applied. Eschatology is characteristic of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, where it has a specific significance.

tion is much too weak: higher knowledge transcends lower knowledge in its entirety and in fact does away with it. In reality Śaṅkara does not believe in a continuity of the ego after death, despite many texts which make a contrary impression. Ultimately transmigration is not real. The ultimate doctrine is clearly stated as follows: 'There is in reality no transmigrating soul different from the Lord.'[90] This is nothing but the consequence or mere re-statement of the central Advaitic doctrine that the individual soul is not different from the Absolute.

Concluding this short investigation, in which anticipations of future analyses had to occur, we may say that it is clear that in Buddhism as well as in Advaita Vedānta the somewhat simple or naive doctrine of the transmigration of souls or of reincarnation in the popular sense does not occur. In both cases general and impersonal forces and supraindividual causal relations replace the view of the simple continuity of the ego after death, and thus we return again to the ancient doctrine of impersonal *karman*.

A historical but philosophically speaking important question is whether originally only the impersonal *karman* theory occurred in India, or whether there was also the concept of an individual soul which is reborn after an interval separating death and birth. Both possibilities have found ardent and learned advocates. In the opinion of A.A. Macdonell and A.B. Keith[91] the theory of transmigration was only introduced with the Upaniṣads and did not exist previously. Against this R.D. Ranade defended the view that the idea of transmigration could be traced back to the Vedas. He quotes especially a hymn of the first *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda*,[92] of which the last two verses state that 'the immortal principle, conjoined with the mortal one, moves backwards and forwards by virtue of its natural power; but the wonder of it is, the poet goes on to say that the mortal and immortal elements keep moving ceaselessly in opposite directions, with the result that people are able to see the one but unable to see the other.'[93] Ranade fol-

90 *Satyam, neśvarād anyaḥ saṁsārī: BSB*. 1.1.5.
91 *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, Introduction clxxii: 'absence of metempsychosis before 600 B.C.'
92 I. 164.
93 R.D. Ranade, *A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy*, Poona 1926, 151.

lows here the interpretation of Roth, Böhtlingk and Geldner - against Oldenberg -, i.e., that the idea of transmigration is contained in these verses. It seems, however, not quite necessary to draw this conclusion. It is possible and perhaps even likely that the lines express a more or less contrary view. When we consider the verse more closely, we see first expressed the conviction that there are two principles in men, one immortal and one mortal - the well known theme of '*due sunt in homine*' ('there are two in man'), which is universally found (cf. the celebrated Vedic hymn of the two birds on the tree, one eating and one watching; etc.). Next it is stressed that it is the immortal (and not the mortal) principle which moves, which comes thus very near to Śaṅkara's 'verily, there is no other transmigrant than the Lord.' If this refers to transmigration at all it is incompatible with the opinion that a mortal principle transmigrated. After this the lines speak of movements of both principles in opposite directions. This may have come into being by noticing how the tendencies in man which aim at temporal aims contrast with those whose aim is everlasting. Lastly it is stressed that the mortal principle is visible while the immortal is not; a necessary statement, as it has to elucidate the fact that there are two in man, whereas we see only one.

The last passage which Ranade quotes in support of the view that reincarnation occurs in the Veda speaks about the 'guardian of the body' 'returning frequently (*varīvarti*)' inside the mundane regions.[94] His argument that this guardian denotes the soul is convincing. But then it must be specified which of the two souls is meant here: and there can be no doubt that it is the immortal principle. It is then likely that we should understand that this divine principle comes again and again into the world, manifesting itself in us, as the immortal principle.

If our interpretations are right, there is no reincarnation in the Vedas, whereas it is also rejected or subordinated in different ways in Buddhism as well as in Advaita. The theory of *karman* may have originated among the Ājīvikas.[95] It seems to be beyond doubt that it is an Upaniṣadic doctrine. The *locus classicus*[96] for

94 *Ṛgveda* I. 164.31 ap. Ranade, *ibid*.
95 See Renou, *Religions of Ancient India*, 117.
96 Ranade, o.c. 154.

reincarnation is perhaps the following passage of the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*:[97] 'Being attached, he, together with the work, attains that result to which his subtle body or mind is attached. Exhausting the results of whatever work he did in this life, he returns from that world to this for (fresh) work. Thus does the man who desires (transmigrate)'. Even this passage has been interpreted by Coomaraswamy[98] in an anti-reincarnationist sense; but his arguments are not very convincing.

There is no certainty that the theory of transmigration was ever universally accepted; it is quite possible that it was a popular belief, from time to time rejected by the philosophers. This holds for Buddhism and Advaita. In Buddhism, the ego does not transmigrate because there is merely continuity of *karman*; in Advaita neither the ego nor transmigration is real; the notion of transmigration disappears as soon as the Self is realized as the sole reality.

The karmic causality, of which the theory of transmigration is a further development, constitutes a special case of a much more universal trend of thought, tending, as we said, towards identifications of special sets of particulars.

4. *Identifications. Plenitude*

In a verse of the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*, preceding the verse quoted in the previous section,[99] Brahman, the Self, is identified consecutively 'with the intellect, the *manas* and the vital force, with the eyes and ears, with earth, water, air and ether, with fire and what is other than fire, with desire and the absence of desire, with anger and the absence of anger, with righteousness and unrighteousness, with everything -' in short, 'identified with this and with that,' i.e., according to Śaṅkara in the commentary, with what is perceived and with what is inferred.

One might suppose that such lists of identifications are especially applied to Brahman as it is the Absolute and the supporter of everything, and is probably contained in some way or

97 4.4.6.
98 A.K. Coomaraswamy, *On the one and only Transmigrant.* Supplement, Journal of the American Oriental Society 3 (1944) 19-42.
99 *BAU.* 4.4.5.

another in everything. But this is not so. The identifications of all kinds of entities with each other, already beginning in the Vedas, occur very frequently in the Brāhmaṇas, of which they can be said to be characteristic. Examples are abundant. We may quote, with Oldenberg:[100] 'Viṣṇu is the sacrifice', 'Prajāpati is the year', 'the cow is breath', 'there are three kinds of water: the frog, the water plant *avakā* and the bamboo stem', etc.

Oldenberg has shown that the significance is not merely symbolic. Here are realities and real identifications, as can be seen from the fact that identities are utilised to influence reality. When for instance a certain reality is to be influenced, it is considered equally effective if the same influence is exerted on another entity, which is considered 'identical' with the former. Before attention is paid to the magical element which is undoubtedly contained herein, texts of the Brāhmaṇas themselves may be considered. They offer two further suggestions. Firstly a term is used which characterises the relation between two identified entities: *nidāna* (from the root *dā*-, 'to bind'). It denotes in the *Ṛgveda* a band, a rope or a halter, referring for instance to the bondage of cows before they are released by Indra. In the Brāhmaṇas it comes to denote the reason and foundation of identifications, e.g., 'verily, the sacrificing priest is the animal by virtue of the *nidāna'*,[101] etc.[102] A magical rope or band binds the two phenomena which are considered identical.

The second suggestion consists of explanations, e.g., 'the animal is breath; because as long as it breathes it is an animal'[103] or 'the *ṛks* (of the *Ṛgveda*) are the earth, because they are recited on the earth';[104] and various etymological explanations like: 'Indra is the central breath; because the central breath kindles the other breaths and is accordingly called *indha*, "kindling"' etc.

These explanations are valid in so far as they explain why certain entities are connected with others (whether they are

100 H. Oldenberg, *Die Weltanschaung der Brāhmaṇa-Texte*. Gōttingen 1919, 110. For what follows 110-123.
101 *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* III. 7.1.11 *ibid*., 117.
102 Id. III. 2.4.10.15 *ibid.*
103 Id. III. 8.3.15. *ibid*., 118.
104 Id. IV. 6.7.1 *ibid.*

sometimes so-called ‘secondary’ explanations does not concern us here); but they do not explain why this special mode or connection, i.e., identity, is supposed to exist; this is presupposed. Likewise, it remains unclarified why the *nidānas* do not only bind, but establish identity between two sides.

When such forms of thought are characterised as ‘magical’,[105] a term is used which denotes that at least the following two elements are present here: the conviction that knowledge is power; and the conviction that power over an entity can be obtained by gaining power over another entity which is considered identical with the former. When a power B is known, power over another entity A is secured by gaining knowledge of the effective identity of A and B: ‘the main procedure in achieving that knowledge’, says Gonda,[106] ‘consisted in identifying these powers, because, in their opinion, a potency A would doubtless be known and controlled, if only its identity with a potency B which was already known, could be established.’

That identifications are magically effective and not arbitrary or a play with concepts and words can also be seen from the fact that certain identifications are rejected. Oldenberg has given examples such as: ‘goats, sheep and wild animals are not all animals; but cattle constitutes all animals’.[107] The wrong identifications are as dangerous as the right ones are beneficial. This is seen especially when the ideas of identity receive concrete shape in the central ritual act, the sacrifice, as we shall see below.

105 A term like magical need not be associated exclusively with primitive and undeveloped (nowadays also ‘underdeveloped’) stages of humanity. It is on the contrary a permanent factor in all ancient civilisations and in civilisations like the Indian, which are highly developed. It is for instance an essential element, amazingly effective too, in Gandhi's *satyāgraha*, ‘holding to the truth’, as Zimmer has shown describing in general the power of the ‘act of truth’ (H. Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, London 1952, 160-172). - For magical elements in other aspects of Indian culture see for instance: J. Gonda, *Zur Frage nach dem Ursprung und Wesen des Indischen Dramas*, Acta Orientalia 19 (1943) 329-453; W. Ruben, *Schamanismus im alten Indien*, Acta Orientalia 18 (1940); J.F. Staal, *Sanskrit and Sanskritization*.

106 J. Gonda, *Notes on Brahman*, Utrecht 1950, 9; Cf. id., *Inleiding tot het Indische denken*, Antwerpen-Nijmegen 1948, ch. II.

107 *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* XIII 3.2.3 ap. Oldenberg, o.c. 119.

Prāyaścitta, 'atonement, expiation'[108] became necessary in connection with wrong identifications, i.e., errors in performance of the ritual. Whether the ritual act is disturbed by an error made by the priest (wrong recitation of a *mantra*, reversed order of certain actions, effects of forgetfulness, changes, etc.) or by factors which lie outside him (extinction of the fire, breaking of a ritual object, theft of the *soma*, appearance of a raven on the sacred beverage, etc.) - the result of the sacrifice is annihilated and dangerous consequences may result.[109] In such cases *prāyaścitta* has to take place, consisting in general in a sacrifice addressed to Varuṇa.

From this magical efficiency of the right identification and the calamity resulting from wrong identification, or from the corresponding effects of rightly and wrongly performed ritual acts, it is but a step to the ideas expressed in the terms *vidyā* and *avidyā*, translated by Sénart as 'magical efficiency of knowledge and inefficiency of its contrary.'[110] This translation is justified from the beginning of the *Chāndogya*, which deals with the sacred syllable *Om*.[111] First certain identifications are given: '*Ṛk* is speech; *Sāma* is life; the *udgītha* is the syllable *Om*...'. Then it is stated that knowledge of those identities is magically effective: 'He verily becomes the gratifier of desires, who, knowing (*vidvān*) this, realises that the syllable *Om* is the *udgītha*... From this syllable the threefold knowledge (*trayī vidyā*, i.e., the three Vedas) comes forth: *Om* precedes the incantations (of the *Yajurveda*). *Om* precedes the recitations (of the *Ṛgveda*). *Om* precedes the chants (of the *Sāmaveda*)... Through this syllable sacrifices are performed by those who know this and by those who do not. Knowledge (*vidyā*) and ignorance (*avidyā*), how-

108 See Renou-Filliozat, o.c. 360-361. The term occurs since the *Atharvaveda*.

109 S.N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy I*, Cambridge 1922, 21, gives a good example: '... when Tvastr performed a sacrifice for the production of a demon who would be able to kill his enemy Indra, owing to the mistaken account of a single word the object was reversed and the demon produced was killed by Indra'. Cf. *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* I 6.3.10. Con scious use is made of the effects of a wrongly performed sacrifice, in order to injure the lover of one's wife, in *BAU* 4.4. 12 (see B. Heimann, o.c. 155).

110 See above p. 38, n. 38.

111 *CU*. 1.1.5; 7-10.

ever, are different. Only what is performed with knowledge (*vidyā*), with faith (*śraddhā*), with *upaniṣad*[112] is effective (*vīryavattaraz*)'.

Thus knowledge of identifications gives power, and this power is gained primarily by the central act which effectuates and realises identifications: the sacrifice. It can be approximately seen what the universe (in which man is supposed to be included) must have been, at least in one of its aspects, for the human beings who expressed themselves in the BrāhmaGas and the Upaniṣads: an originally unknown and uncontrolled whole, unified through recurrent identifications which increase man's power over it and which make man realize the whole to be a whole of interdependent entities where 'everything is in everything'[113] (the inter-connections between inside and outside are still so close and numerous that it is impossible to discriminate here between realism and idealism). This remains the background of Advaita: its influence can be perceived throughout the system. It can be symbolically expressed in the central idea of *pūrṇam*, plenum, plenitude, fullness, which occurs in a famous Brāhmaṇa of the *Bṛhadāraṇyankopaniṣad*, known as the peace chant:[114]

> 'That is plenitude, this is plenitude,
> Plenitude proceeds from plenitude
> Taking plenitude from plenitude,
> It remains as plenitude'.

Its survival in Advaita can be seen from the identification of *pūrṇan* with release itself, for instance by Sureśvara.[115] Śaākara interprets in his commentary[116] 'that' (*adaḥ*) as Brahman and 'this' (*idam*) as the universe. *PūrGam*, he says, is infinite and all-pervading. This differentiated Brahman (the universe) pro-

112 Which probably means here 'truth'; cf. Sénart ad hoc.
113 The expression is from J.C. Heesterman.
114 *BAU*. 5.1.1.
115 *Saṁbandha Vārtika* 268-269 a: 'wholeness is release (*pūrṅam niḥśsreyasam*). Hence the non-wholesomeness (*apūrṇam*) which is on account of nescience appears but illusory. Therefore, when nescience is destroyed through the knowledge of the real self, wholeness alone remains'. I am thankful to Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan, who has given me free access to his translation of the *Saṁbandha Vārtika*.
116 Transl. Swami Madhavananda, Almora 1950, 801 sq.

ceeds from the infinite supreme Brahman as the effect proceeds from its cause. But 'although it emanates as an effect, it does not give up its nature, infinitude, the state of the supreme Self; it emanates as infinite'. If our ignorance is removed, the original identity between the two, which has in reality never disappeared, is realized and 'it remains as the unconditioned infinite Brahman alone'. The Ācārya quotes other scriptural passages which have the same meaning, e.g., 'This was indeed Brahman in the begining. It knew only itself. Therefore it became all (*sarvam*)'.[117] Elsewhere he quotes a passage which is a typical example of the magical concept of the universe: 'Whatever is here is there and whatever is there is here'.[118]

Sarvam has almost always to be understood in this sense, which refers to certain magical connections and relations which keep the whole together and unify the All. In this manner the significance of the epithet *ananta* 'infinite, endless' must be understood. It occurs at an important and central place in the *Taittirīya* as a proper definition (*svarūpalakṣaṇa*)[119] of Brahman: 'Brahman is reality, knowledge, infinity'[120] and in his commentary upon this passage Śaṇkara calls the infinitude a characteristic mark of Brahman.[121]

The same remark occurs in the commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*, when Śaṅkara interprets ether (*ākāśa*) in the *sütra*: 'the ether on account of characteristic marks'[122] - as meaning Brahman. One of the arguments for this equation is based upon two identifications, where both entities have the infinite as their common characteristic. One infinite is identified with the *udgītha*,

117 *BAU*. 1.4.10.
118 *KaĞha Up*. 4.10: *Yadeveha tadamutra yadamutra tadanviha*. Such a principle can be called the foundation of the entire Tantra, a doctrinal development (or a Veda, namely, the fifth) of undoubtedly magical character. Cf. *Viśvasāratantra: yad ihāsti tad anyatra. yan nehāsti na tat kvacit*. 'What is here is elsewhere; what is not here is nowhere' (c.f. P.H. Pott, *Yoga en yantra*, Leiden 1946, 31, 126, 153, 159), where magical significance is given to these well known lines of the *Mahābhārata*, where they denote the 'wholeness' of *itihāsa* itself.
119 See e.g. Mahadevan, *The Philosophy of Advaita*, London 1938, 104.
120 *Tait. Up*. 2.1: *satyaG j÷ānam anantam brahma*.
121 *taccānantyam brahmaliṅgam*.
122 *ākāśtallingāt* BS. 1.1.22.

of which the *Chāndogya* says: 'the *udgītha* is superior to everything; it is infinite (*ananta*)'[123] after which the *bhāṣyakāra* remarks: 'Now this endlessness (infinity) is a characteristic mark of Brahman.'[124]

The idea of *ananta* preserves a universe filled with magical connections and identifications. This aspect is in all probability much more fundamental and certainly more difficult to understand for the 'modern mind', than the purely quantitative aspect which is also present.[125] The quantitative element is traceable in other terms denoting the same infinitude, as for instance (apart from the above mentioned *pūrṇam* and *sarvam*) *bhūman*, 'greatness, abundance',[126] or *bṛhat* 'the great', signifying in the programmatic title of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* according to Śaṅkara not only that this is the greatest of the Upaniṣads, but also that it is 'the greatest in respect of its substance and theme',[127] as it deals with the great, *bṛhat* i.e., Brahman, the Absolute. Apart from this, the quantitative aspect is also expressed by ŚaGkara in his commentary upon the definition of the *Taittirīya*, where he says that Brahman is omnipresent, i.e., infinite in space, eternal, i.e., infinite in time and a universal substance, i.e., infinite in substance.[128] That is, Brahman is *actually* infinite.

This *actuality* of infinity in Brahman is the basis of perhaps the most important, and certainly the most striking, of the doctrines of Advaita: i.e., that the Absolute is not only a reality, but *the only reality*. For in Śaṇkara's interpretation outside actual infinitude nothing can exist. From the thesis that only Brahnan is real the whole system of Advaita can be derived. It is presupposed in all the other Advaitic doctrines.

The quantitative aspect of infinity remains secondary: magical identifications remain in the background of the 'plenum', as we

123 *CU*. 1.9.2.
124 *BSB*. 1.1.22.
125 Cf. also Lacombe, o.c. 213-214.
126 e.g. in *CU*. 7.23 sq.
127 S. Kuppuswami Sastri, Introduction to Swami Madhavananda's translation of Śaṇkara's commentary on the *BAU*, vii.
128 *tatra trividhaṃ hyānantyaṃ deśataḥ kālato vastutaśceti*, ap. Lacombe, o.c, 214, n. 3.

shall observe repeatedly. Thus Śaṇkara comments upon *pūrṇa* in the peace chant of the *BṛhadāracGyaka* as: '*pūrṇa*, not limited by anything (infinite), i.e., all-pervading'. This gives not only a literal interpretation (as infinite), but also (unconvincingly connected) a more significant dynamic interpretation, which transcends the quantitative denotation of infinitude and which contains a magical element.

In general magic plays an important, though often hidden, part in Śaṅkara's doctrine.[129] These heritages of the Brahmāṇical and Upaniṣadic days play a smaller part in later Advaita, where the rational approach becomes increasingly predominant. The magical aspect interests us here not for historical reasons, but because its power undoubtedly pervades much of original Advaita. Advaita interpreted as the rational system, which it becomes in later works (*Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya, Vedāntaparibhāṣā* etc.) could never have captured the mind as entirely as it has done. It could not have conquered Buddhism, however rationalistic the Buddhistic systems, especially Mādhyamika were at that time, and it could not have unified Hinduism as it did. But as we shall see, Śaṅkara's concept of *j÷āna* goes beyond magic, whereas there are reasons to accept the tradition that Śaṅkara set limits to some magical practices of Tantric origin.[130]

A seemingly lucid concept like *anantatva*, 'infinity' is pervaded by magical elements. The background and content of this concept is totally different from the background and content of the concept of infinity in the West. The terminological parallelism, here as often, is misleading. This may be seen from three characteristics of the Western concept (or concepts) of infinitude. Later the meaning of the Neoplatonic infinite will be considered in greater detail.

(1) In the deeper and possibly unconscious layers of the Western mind, the infinite is associated with the *ouroborós*, the infinity of the snake which keeps its own tail in its mouth. This is an obscure dragonish being, a terrible and devouring mother, dwelling in a profound and dangerous region.[131] (2) In Greece, the limited

129 Cf. especially Lacombe, o.c. 305 sq. and Index, s.v. magic; cf. also B. Heimann, o.c. 154, n. 1.
130 See below II, 10, 110, n. 357.
131 Cf. E. Neumann, o.c. Index s.v. Ouroboros.

is the clear cut and well ordered divine, whereas the unlimited and infinite, *ápeiron*, is chaotic dark matter (*húlē*), counterpart of the deity, sometimes conceived as the evil principle (*kakón*). In the classical age of the Greeks the Gods are never conceived as infinite beings. Infinity as a positive concept appears late and becomes preponderant only in Neoplatonism.[132] (3) The Christian God is infinite, but his infinity does not prevent him from being arbitrary in his choices of existence in space and time. He creates for instance once, at a particular time, and not in all eternity (as some later sects interpret it). Likewise he appears once and is not omnipresent (despite the contrary opinion of some later mystics).[133] Infinity does not mean that nothing exists outside God: it has on the contrary only meaning in opposition to and in contrast with the finitude of the created being.

A comparative study of the infinite or plenum is bound to yield interesting and possibly unexpected results. In connection with contemporary European philosophy we will have to ask what the place of freedom can be in a universe conceived as a plenum.

Identifications constitute the background of much of Śaṅkara's Advaita, as will be seen below. The fundamental relation of Advaita, however is identity, and not identification. *Adhyāsa* on the other hand, perhaps the most original of Śaṅkara's concepts, is an identification. Lacombe has moreover shown how identifications as 'correspondances ontologiques' could develop into the theory of *lakṣaṇa*, 'indirect expression'.[134]

5. *Sacrifice. Ontological reflections*

In Vedic literature the religious act par excellence is the sacrifice (*yaj÷a, homa*).[135] The view that sacrifice is an act by which certain advantages are gained, such as prosperity, long life, health, cattle and male offspring, is only partly true; the real significance lies deeper. According to Hubert and Mauss, sacrifice is a con-

132 See below III, 3 and Appendix 236-7.
133 Cf. the author's *Remarks on rationality and irrationality in East and West*, Mysindia, June 19, 1955.
134 o.c. 83. Cf. R. de Smet, *The Theological Method of Śaṅkara*. Revue philosophique de Louvain 52 (1954) 31-74.
135 Renou-Filliozat, o.c. 345-346.

secreation which transforms not only the victim, but also the sacrificing priest and sometimes an external object, which is connected with the ritual act. Thus it transforms profane into sacred and establishes with the victim as mediator a communication between profane and sacred. This communication is a transformation, 'fulfilled not by the grace of the Gods, but as a natural result of the sacrifice'.[136] Thus it becomes difficult to discriminate between a sacrifice and a magical act. Accordingly, the efficacy of the sacrifice is determined by the correctness of the ritual mechanism, which does not depend upon will or intention of the sacrificing priest. Therefore, and also because the Gods play no part in granting the fruit of an act[137] which itself produces the effects, the sacrifice can be called an impersonal activity or process.

The doctrine of sacrifice is the central topic of the Brāhmaṇas, which are rightly called 'the true source of Indian thought'.[138] The God of sacrifice is also the creative principle of the world, Prajāpati. He creates for instance the sun by sacrificing.[139] There is a close connection between the creative act in the Vedic sense and the act of sacrifice. Betty Heimann has dealt with this and summarizes her investigations as follows. She refers to myths of creation where the creator is also the material cause of the universe (e.g., the primordial *puruṣa* is sacrificed and his parts become the different realms of the world). In connection with sacrifice she refers to the '*do ut des*-principle',[140] which explains the significance of the sacrifice only partly.[141] She says: [142] 'Both the concept of creation and the concept of sacrifice contain possibilities of development which are unintelligible for the West. The Indian idea of creation starts from the unconscious and mechanical urge towards emanation, and develops only in the second place into the variant, in which the material cause is replaced by a conscious activity. The sacrifice is conceived in India as it were as a scientific process of transformation; (starting with the con-

136 Dasgupta, o.c. I, 21.
137 See below 65.
138 Renou-Filliozat, o.c. 293.
139 *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* II, 2.4.6 ap. Oldenberg. o.c. 173. Cf. also *Ṛgveda*. 10.130: *Sṛṣṭiyaj÷a*.
140 e.g. *BAU*, 6.3.1.
141 Keith shared this opinion; Cf. Renou-Filliozat, o.c. 345.
142 Heimann, o.c. 153.

scious "give and take") it comes to denote (also) changes which are unconscious and more or less mechanical'.

Thus eating and digesting, but also speaking are acts interpreted as sacrifices.[143] On the other hand, there are many examples which show that entities come into being not through creation, but through sacrifice. In the *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, for instance, it is said[144] that each member of the sequence: rain, food, sperm, embryo, 'is born from this offering.'[145] Through the sacrifice transformation takes place, which presupposes the existence of a factor which transforms, a kind of substance which can be represented by food.[146] The idea of sacrifice can also denote unconscious, organical transformation. The sacrificial background limits creation rigorously to that which follows the rule of continuity, - that nothing can come out of nothing. In this context we have to understand numerous passages such as the famous *Chāndogya* text:[147] 'How from the non-existent could the existent be produced?'[148] which plays a very important role in the later philosophies. The Indian concept of creation need not imply the idea of creation out of nothing, as it generally does in the monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This will be discussed below.[149] Indian ideas of sacrifice and creation can be characterized as continuous, objective, scientific as it were, and entirely impersonal.

With regard to sacrifice the ways in which transformations take place and connections are established should be specified. In general magical connections are established between ritual acts and the cosmic order. These connections are the above mentioned *nidānas*. Through these connections 'sacrifice has created the world, and its correct order determines and maintains the world process'.[150]

143 id. 157.
144 *CU*. 5.5.1-5.8.2.
145 *tasyā āhuter saṁbhavati*.
146 See above II, 2: 41-44.
147 6.2.2; Cf. *BG*. 2.16. See the author's *Parmenides and Indian thought*, The Philosophical Quarterly 28 (1955), 81-106: 86 sq. and below II. 12.
148 *Kaṭham asataḥ saj jāyeta?*
149 Especially III, 5.
150 Renou-Filliozat, o.c. 338.

This last remark is important and may explain the real significance and meaning of the Vedic sacrifice. It is not easy to understand, personally and existentially, the world view and sentiment of those, for whom the sacrifice was so central. A fuller elucidation will require reference to contemporary philosophy.

Our easy way of approaching ancient or distant philosophies is to seek their answers to our questions. Instead of following the inner rhythm which a sensitive student may perceive in ancient texts, we order our questions in large frames, which seem universally applicable. Thus it has become customary to report about philosophies under three headings (either preceded or not by an epistemological introduction): God, world and the human soul. This procedure is at any rate preferable to the one which is unconsciously determined by this world view. Both are however misleading. Concerning the epistemological point of view, referred to above, we can be brief: though it has become increasingly important in later Advaita, it is strikingly out of place in connection with original Advaita. There is some truth in a remark of Guénon, an often exaggerating and emotional interpreter of Indian thought despite his profundity, that modern man has become so much interested in the theory of knowledge itself has receded into the background.

We fail accordingly if we try to apply the three headings mentioned above to Vedic views. For there is not only no God in any sense associated with that concept in our mind, but there is no world which surrounds us as an independent external entity or as an object; and there is no soul as foundation of our consciousness or receptacle of sense perceptions. That those concepts play no central part in Vedic literature means that we have to remove them from our mind. Such concepts should not be in the background as an established order, in which e.g. the sacrifice can be understood and interpreted. We should for example not assume that there is a human being and an outside world and that one of the possible relations between the two is the act of sacrifice. Both ‘human being’ and ‘world’ are ideas which arose in a modern context. Therefore we have to see how sacrifice existed in the beginning and how only later ‘human beings’ and ‘world’ came to exist. If a kind of meditative reflection can lead us away from the modern phenomena and lead us towards sacrifice as a unique phenomenon, we may be in a position to understand how only

sacrifice created a world which was the predecessor of what we now call world. We have to imagine sacrifice as the act, physical as well as spiritual, which organized and ordered an entirely unknown and unintelligible chaos into a *world* and made man himself *man*. Sacrifice is one of the possible steps by which man reached consciousness of a world as the basis of a world view and of himself as a being. Through the sacrificial act the world and man came into being as conscious and intelligible beings; i.e., sacrifice provided being with what was previously inaccessible. This does not mean that sacrifice created man and the world as entities in themselves, but that it made them exist for human consciousness (and created human consciousness), and made them accessible or gave them intelligibility. This is the philosophical significance of the belief that sacrifice created everything. Sacrifice determined previously unknown chaos as being for some being. The world and man did not exist for anybody until the sacrifice made them accessible and 'discovered' them.

That the Gods were unimportant when compared with sacrifice can be seen from the Mīmāṁsā view, a later and more formal development in the spirit of the Brāhmaṇas. According to the Prābhākara school, the sacrifice 'cannot be regarded as laid down for the purpose of securing the favours of the Deity.... the Deity is there only as a hypothetical entity postulated as the recipient of the sacrificial offering'.[151] In Mīmāṁsā the Gods were simply regarded as 'grammatical datives'.

He who creates intelligibility makes being accessible, because that which is intelligible, must be. The reverse does not hold according to all philosophical doctrines, but in the West it is generally accepted, since its scholastic formulation in the thesis of the intelligibility of being. Among contemporary philosophers, being and intelligibility seem to coincide completely for Martin Heidegger.[152] An attempt will be made to show that the Vedic sacrifice is the counterpart of the concept of being as conceived by

151 Śālikanātha Miśra, *Prakaranapa÷cikā*, 185 sq. ap. G.N. Jha *Pūrva Mīmāṁsā in its sources*, Banaras 1942, 257.

152 M. Heidegger, Sein und Zeit; cf. A. de Waelhens, *La philosophie de Martin Heidegger*, Louvain 1955, Chap. XVI, 267-274. For Plotinus, see below III. 3: 185.

this important contemporary thinker, whose chief interest is ontology.

Heidegger on methodological grounds chooses as a starting point for his investigations human being (*Dasein*). His ultimate aim is to proceed to being itself (*Sein*) and thus towards a general ontology. We do not in the beginning know what being is, as there is at first only the opaque, chaotic and unintelligible structure of the various kinds of 'existants' (*Seiendes*), of which our own being is one. We have to presuppose that our *Seiendes, Dasein*, has as a mode of its being, 'discovering-being' (*Entdeckendsein*); because of this it is able to discover being. Being, on the other hand, (including *Dasein* itself) must be principally open, accessible, intelligible - nay, constitute the intelligibility itself which our being projects upon the 'existants'. Neither the intelligibility of being nor being as intelligibility, nor the *Entdeckendsein* of our own being have to be understood in an intellectual sense only. To discover being means on the one hand to superimpose upon the existants intelligibility and order, on the other hand to realize some of the possibilities of our own being. The latter is a *pro-ject* and it cannot be otherwise, as it is evident according to Heidegger[153] that our own being cannot transcend its own possibilities, but only realise them. Thus 'the constitution of being of the existants is equivalent to the interpretation of these existants as a function of our own possibilities of existence'.[154]

Thus we find in Heidegger's work a philosophy - only part of its foundation could be sketched here - which reduces being and intelligibility to our own human being and which shows how our own being through being gives shape to the chaos of existants, which only then becomes accessible or becomes 'being'. Such a philosophical view is the basis of e.g., the psychological view according to which consciousness originates from the unconscious and constitutes the outside world as outside world as well as the inside world as inside world. The metaphysical idea, however,

153 But it is difficult to understand the significance of the expression; a being transcends its own possibilities.

154 'On le voit: constituer l'être des existants équivaut à interpreter ces existants en fonction des possibilités d'existence du *Dasein* lui-même': de Waelhens, o.c. 269. Cf. above I. 3 B: 13.

should not be understood as a psychologism; it is on the other hand the ontological foundation of any possible psychology.

The Vedic sacrifice can now be interpreted as one of the modes of human being which constitutes being. This ontological interpretation enables us to see how it was possible (ontically, as Heidegger would say) that such importance was attached to the ritual act. Any other approach would be bound to judge ritualistic ideas as exaggerations.

The transformation or consecration which is effectuated through sacrifice, is not as a transformation from one being into another but the constitution of being itself. Previously nothing existed but the undifferentiated and chaotic, unknown and unconscious, supposed unity of the existants. The sacrifice brought the light of consciousness, in accordance with the well known psychological interpretation of many light mythologies (C.G. Jung, E. Neumann, etc.), as well as the light of being in the sense alluded to above. Human being realised in the sacrificial act one of its possibilities and discovered therefore apart from other being also its own being. Because of this it must have become impressed with its own power and strength. Accordingly, a deeper interpretation has to be given to other phenomena connected with the sacrifice. It is not meaningful to hold the view that sacrifice connects previous known beings with each other; on the contrary, it gives being and makes accessible what previously was entirely hidden. This differentiation breaks through a chaotic unity, which is supposed to have previously existed only at the time of the differentiation itself. The frightening and abysmal character, which must have been connected with these first differentiating discoveries,[155] caused man to desire to be connected or united with the newly discovered reality. The *nidānas* and identifications do not connect previously known beings with each other, but discover aspects of being and try at the same time to appease the conflict of differentiation by positing connections and identifications. This explains the unifying tendency found in all ancient and archaic civilisations. Later, human being was able to endure the tensions of the mind regarding unidentified and unconnected entities.

155 Cf. Neumann, o.c. Index s.v. Grosse Mutter als furchtbare Mutter, 520.

When in the beginning, for example, the cow is identified with breath, the 'power' - interpretation fails to give any explanation: we do not possess power over breath, and try to obtain power over a cow, or the reverse. Although this interpretation remains sometimes valid, another activity of human being is at work here: first being is discovered, i.e., the cow is understood as being a cow and breath as being breath; next, the awe and perhaps fear resulting from this discovery is somewhat tempered by the bold identification of cow and breath. This fear is not something 'modern', but it existed wherever being came into being or where consciousness arose, as for instance in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*:[156] 'The *Ātman* existed alone, in the beginning, in the form of a *puruṣa*. Looking round himself, he saw nothing but himself. Then he said: 'I am'!.... He feared thereupon; therefore he who is alone fears'. Only the fact that we have gone beyond identifications and have accepted discriminations more fully, i.e., recognised as *being* the meagre connections which exist between breath and cow, accounts for the fact that we style the previous mode of being of human being 'magical'.

It is probable that man started soon reflecting about this discovery and creative activity, in which being came into being. To say that he tried to appease the discrimination by identification is the same as saying that he refused to accept his activity as really creative and held on to the doctrine that no being can originate if not from being. The power nevertheless connected with this activity must have been so impressive that human being ascribed it readily to the superhuman, rather than bear himself this first responsibility, which must have been experienced as a guilt[157] in as far as it created the awe-inspiring but conflicting discriminations. Thus the Gods were created by the performance of a sacrificial act and nothing new was supposed to have come into being through them. The sacrificial act led necessarily to the existence of Gods - and this was recognised explicitly (with more readiness than in many modern minds): according to our texts, the Gods have come into being through sacrifice and they have

156 i. 4. 1-2; quoted as a motto for the chapter on existentialism in: I.M. Bocheński, *Europäische Philosophie der Gegenwart*, Bern 1947, 159.

157 In a non-religious sense; cf. for instance in Sartre's 'we are condemned to be free'.

gained immortality through sacrifice. Rightly famous is the *Ṛgvedic* verse: ‘with sacrifice the Gods sacrificed the sacrifice. These were the first usages’.[158]

Here we have almost all the themes which will develop into Advaitic doctrines. The magical and creative activity by which being came into being and which caused awe and fear becomes *adhyāsa*, ‘superimposition’, which is the key-term of Śaṅkara's explanation (which is an ‘explaining away’, as a modern Advaitin said) of the world. The constitution of being or the sacrifice which also produces the Gods, results in the idea that even Īśvara is conditioned by *māyā* (as *avidyā* or *adhyāsa*). The view that nothing can come into being through discriminations and through human or divine creativity, becomes the doctrine that only Brahman exists, the rest being illusory, whereas *Īśvara* is not really creative. The appeasing of discriminations by resorting to identifications leads to the central idea of *mokṣa*, ‘release’, the highest identity, the fullness (*pūrṇam*) of being, the ultimate peace (*śānti*). And thus the aim of Advaita can provisionally be described as the re-constitution of this fullness of being which is *mokṣa*. That this can be realised by knowledge, and no longer by *karma*, is Śaṅkara's thesis, which is related to the general reaction against *karma* which took place in Indian thought.

The above interpretation of the sacrifice as being could be further corroborated by terminological investigations. There seems to be a close connection between *sat* and *ṛta*, which meant originally[159] the wheel, described by the sun in its daily or annual revolution. Subsequently it denoted the wheel of existence (*saṁsāra*, transmigration) as the norm of existence (in *ṛta* and later in *dharmacakra*).[160] If the sacrifice is *sat*, it is appropriate that the ritual exactness, with which it is performed is called *satyam*, as in the Brāhmaṇas.[161]

One last remark, referring to Heidegger's thought, may be made concerning the ‘world’. That sacrifice created man and his world in a certain sense means that man, constituted himself as a

158 *Ṛgveda* 1.164. 50.
159 See above II 2: 42.
160 Cf. Silburn, o.c. 14-16; 192, n. 2.
161 Cf. id. 89: ‘exactitude rituelle’.

being, and therefore as *Dasein*, a *Seiendes* of which the most central characteristic (*existential*) is 'being-in-the-world' (*in-der-Welt-sein*). The negative aspect of this creation is accordingly expressed as 'being immersed in the world' (*Saṁsāra*).[162]

6. *Reaction against the sacrifice*

The Vedic sacrifice was a mile-stone, symbolising and indicating one of the impressive achievements of human being in its development as being and towards being. The conviction that sacrifice was the basis of the entire universe, including even the Gods, shows that it was itself the basis of the entire Vedic civilisation and the main inspiration of the vast Vedic literature. But as soon as the reality, which was accessible to it, was discovered and the sacrificial act had lost its creative efficacy, the central place accorded to the sacrifice led to over-emphasis and codification, which became increasingly rigid. This led to several new developments which are clearly interconnected: (1) the ritual acts were maintained, but interpreted symbolically (as for instance in the Āraṇyakas and in the opening sections of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, where the horse-sacrifice (*aśvamedha*) is interpreted allegorically);[163] (2) the ritual acts were 'interiorised'[164] or spiritualised (leading to another act of equal importance: meditation, and hence to the Advaitic *jñāna* or *vidyā*); (3) the ritual acts were regarded as ineffective in the purely spiritual realm (leading to one of the main theses of Advaita: the inferiority of *karma*): and (4) the ritual acts were abolished altogether (leading to the rejection of the authority of the Vedas and thus to *avaidika* and *nāstika* doctrines, of which the most important ones are the Bauddha doctrines.)[165] Only Mīmāṁsā maintained the Vedic tradition of sacri-

162 This connection was pointed out by Prof. J.L. Mehta (Banaras).

163 T.M.P. Mahadevan, The Upanishads in: *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western* (Government of India), London 1953, 57.

164 See, however, below 71 sq.

165 The close relation between these developments shows clearly that Buddhism was but a natural, though revolutionary, development, a possibility of which the realisation could be expected, and thus closely connected with the *vaidika* and *āstika* developments in the Hindu tradition. This view need not conflict with the view of Murti that there are two traditions in Indian philosophy: *ātmavāda* and *anātmavāda*, or the substance view of reality and the modal view of reality (following a Jaina discrimination *dravyārthika* and *paryāyārthika naya*: see Murti's book, quoted above 48, n. 80, especially 10 sq.). But it changes the content thereof and makes the distinction somewhat more existential than logical: if our view that the sacrifice was the central act and entity is right, the idea of a continuous, self-identical human soul is only a consequence thereof; this is the significance of the statement that the sacrifice when preformed creates the being of human being (or: that the human being becomes human being or realises himself through the sacrificial act). If the idea of sacrifice lies much deeper than the idea of the soul, the abolition of the sacrifice led first to the *nairātmya* doctrine and next to the 'Modal view of Reality'. It may be also possible to see the modal view of reality as the direct outcome of the above mentioned discriminations, which come into being with the origination of being.

fice and karma, though even here further developments took place. We have to consider the second and third developments in greater detail, as they lead to the heart of Advaita.

It is sometimes suggested that a development from the 'outer' to the 'inner' sacrifice took place.[166] This is not exactly correct, because the discrimination between inner and outer did not exist in the earlier portions of the Vedas: when the inner is opposed to the outer, a developed form of self-consciousness has already come into being, and the supremacy of the sacrifice means exactly that this is not yet so and that the dualities of the opposites (the later *dvandvas*) are yet unseparated.[167] In the oldest Vedic sacrifice, the sacrificial act is a total act of what we have afterwards discriminatingly called body and mind. Separation of the two constitutes degeneration: the sacrifice became an external act, after which it was only natural that the possibility of an internal act, which only came then into existence, should be realized. Thus it is merely a convenient modern representation when we speak about a degeneration of the Vedic sacrifice into a purely external activity and subsequently, as a reaction, into interiorisation. In reality it is different: the degeneration itself, caused by the loss by sacrifice of its creative and discovering function has two aspects: exteriorisation and interiorisation. 'Inner' sacrifice is required

166 e.g., Ranade, o.c. 6-8.

167 Cf. Renou-Filliozat, o.c. 339: 'on no distingue pas...entre substance et qualité, substrat et force, animé et inanimé'. The *dvandvas* are later again felt as a burden, when the philosopher wants to return to the original, primordial, unified, plenary situation, comparable with the Vedic situation (cf. the previous section). See e.g. *Vedāntasāra* 1.22, where one of the preliminary requirements for the qualified pupil, *titikṣā*, is defined as 'the ability to bear the pairs of opposites like heat and cold' (*śītoṣṇādidvandvasahiṣṇutā*) (see the translation of Hiriyanna, Poona 1929, and Nikhilananda, Mayavati 1949, 13 and cf. Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, 55).

only in the case of prevailing 'outer' sacrifice, which occurs only at a later stage. It is therefore incorrect to say that the older texts lack the 'inner' and purely spiritual sacrifice. It is an anachronistic projection to blame the early Vedic sacrifice for externalism. Originally, there was nothing external and therefore no need for anything internal.

When discrimination begins there is no conflict yet and unity is still experienced (or perhaps desired for as an escape from beginning conflict). This is expressed in a passage of a Brāhmaṇa of the *Sāmaveda*,[168] where the creator 'thinks silently in his mind: what is in his mind becomes the *sāman* Bṛhat.' For thinking the root *dhyā-* is used, connected with *dhyāna* about which we shall speak below. Thinking is still conceived quite materially, as is manifest from the next sentence: 'he speaks, his speech gives birth to the *sāman* Rathaṁtara, which is, located in him as an embryo'. But it is important to bear in mind - though often forgotten by scholars dealing with ancient civilisations, as well as cultural anthropologists - that in such cases not only the spiritual is conceived rather materially, but the material rather spiritually as well - the two being in fact unseparated.

A transition to the inner sacrifice (from the earlier situation in which the concept of inner and outer is not yet meaningful) is constituted by the *prāṇa* sacrifice. The occasions at which this may have been utilized and the reasons for this are dealt with in a passage of the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*. This shows how a more spiritualized sacrifice was called for, whenever technicalities of the sacrifice led to a conflict of highly formal character (announcing Pūrva Mīmāṁsā and Dharmaśāstra) and the living force of the ancient sacrifice seemed to have been lost. The difficulty is expressed as follows: 'The theologians say: "Should an offering, be made in the house of one who is consecrated, or should an offering not be made?" The man who is consecrated is the oblation, and if he were to sacrifice he would offer a part of the sacrificer; if he were not to sacrifice, then he would omit a joint of the sacrifice'.[169] Keith says. that the solution of this paradoxical difficulty consisted in the performance of the sacrifices concerned, i.e., the new and

168 *Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa* 7.6.1 ap. Oldenberg, 91, 173.
169 *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* VI. 1.4.5 transl. Keith II, 490.

full moon sacrifices (*darśapūrṇamāsa*), not in the ordinary way, but 'In the breath' (*prāṇa*) - 'an idea not rare.'[170]

A *prāṇāgnihotra*,[171] which was also used by the Vaiṣṇava Vaikhānasa,[172] occurs in the *Chāndogyopaniṣad*.[173] The last portion of the fifth *prapāṭhaka* of the *Chāndogya* deals with the Vaiśvānara, 'common to all men, universal,' an epithet of *ātman* and earlier an epithet of Agni.[174] Six sages (the sixth being the famous Uddālaka Āruṇi) expound their views to king Aśvapati Kaikeya, but he characterizes all views as partial views of reality; the Ātman Vaiśvānara is all that and much more. Śaṅkara quotes in the commentary the well known parable of the blind men, touching different parts of an elephant; and proceeds to give more meanings for Vaiśvānara. The next verse[175] contains several identifications which Śaṅkara explains in the following terms: 'The text proceeds to show how in the case of the knower of the Vaiśvānara-Self, the act of eating constitutes the *agnihotra* offering.'[176] Hence the identifications: the chest of the Vaisvānara-Self is the altar, the hairs are the grass (which is strewn on the altar), the mouth is the Āhāvanīya fire, etc. The *agnihotra* (thus being identified with the Vaiśvānara-Self, the performance of the *agnihotra* is replaced by a meditation on these identifications and connections. Śaṅkara expresses this as: 'the whole of this may be taken as an injunction of meditation (*vidhi*) - the sense being that one should meditate in this manner.'[177]

170 *Ibid.* n. 2; 'Cf. *Aitareya Āraṇyaka* III. 2.6; *Śatapatha Āraṇyaka* VIII. 11'.

171 The *agnihotra* is the most important and one of the most simple sacrifices, to be performed in the morning and in the evening by every *brāhmaṇa* or *vaiśya* householder.

172 See Renou-Filliozat, o.c. 346.

173 *CU.* 5.18-24 (trans. Sénart) and Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* (text: Ānandāśrama Series XIV, 309-318; transl. G.N. Jha, Poona 1942, 283-290).

174 See *Ṛgveda* 3.2 (236) and 3.3 (237). The universal character of the Ātman Vaiśvānara is foreshadowed by the universal character of Agni Vaiśvānara: see e.g. 3.2.10, 11: Agni places in all beings his fiery germ (Geldner: 'In diese Wesen legt or seinen Keim'). The individual's wish to participate in the splendour of the Agni Vaiśvānara, which foreshadows the equation of Ātman and Brahman, occurs in 3.3.10; 'Vaiśvānara! your properties I wish for me.....' (Geldner: 'Vaiśvānara! Deine Eigenschaften wünsche ich mir').

175 5.18.2.

176 *bhojane 'gnihotraṁ sampipādayisannāha.*

177 *athavā vidhyarthametadvacanamevamupāsya iti.*

Thus a sacrificial act is replaced by an act of meditation. Even if one objects on the ground that this is only Śaṅkara's interpretation, and not necessarily the meaning of the somewhat obscure Upaniṣad (a view which would merely change the chronology of this philosophical development), it must be admitted that the *agnihotra* sacrifice is not performed, but replaced by other acts, i.e., offering to the different manifestations of *prāṇa*.[178] In the following verses symbolic offerings are prescribed, taking place in the mouth of the sacrificer, which is regarded (according to previous identifications) as the fire Āhavanīya. These are offerings to the different manifestations of *prāṅa*, because they have to be performed while uttering: '*svāhā* to *prāṇa*', '*svāhā* to *vyāna*', etc. Every time the magical efficacy of the symbolic sacrifice is described in analogous terms, for instance (in the first case) as follows: '*Prāṇa* being satisfied (*tṛpyati*), the Eye becomes satisfied; the Eye being satisfied, Heaven becomes satisfied; Heaven being satisfied whatever is under the Heaven and under the Sun becomes satisfied; and through the satisfaction thereof, he himself becomes satisfied; also with offspring, cattle, food, brightness (boldness) and Brahmic glory'.[179]

Lastly some general and very instructive reflections follow. The *agnihotra* seems to be deprecated in another verse[180] where a person who performs it without knowing the philosophy of Vaiśvānara, is compared to someone who commits grave mistakes in the performance. This implies that the philosophy of Vaiśvānara (in Śaṅkara's words: *Vaiśvānaradarśana*) is evaluated more highly than the sacrifice. Śaṅkara himself does not go so far and understands the text as an eulogy: 'By deprecating the well-known *agnihotra*, the text means to eulogise the *agnihotra*-offering made by one who knows the Vaiśvānara'. Knowledge, however, increases the efficacy, because the Upaniṣad says: 'But if one knowing this offers the *agnihotra*, his libation falls upon all regions, all beings and all selves.'[181]

178 Mahadevan, o.c.
179 19.2.
180 24.1.
181 24.2:.... *sarveṣu lokeṣu sarveṣu bhūteṣu sarveṣv ātmasu.*

Next it is said that whoever sacrifices while knowing the Vaiśvānara, loses all sin. Śaṅkara stresses in the commentary the value of knowledge of the Self for the removal of previously gathered 'merit and demerit'. Ritual mistakes like offering the remnants of one's food to a Caṇḍala are unimportant when the Vaiśvānara is known.

This passage, referred to by Mahadevan as well as by Ranade,[182] is rightly famous. Still it is not a completely inner sacrifice which is found here;[183] there are still many purely ritualistic remnants. But this text constitutes a transition to the pure act of meditation.

Both scholars also refer to a text which is more explicit. It occurs in the *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṅa Upaniṣad*[184] and speaks about an inner *agnihotra* (*antara-agnihotra*) in the following terms: 'As long as a man speaks, so long he cannot breathe, then he offers the breath in speech; as long as a man breathes, so long he cannot speak, then he offers the speech in the breath. These are the two never ending immortal oblations; waking and sleeping, he continually offers them. All other oblations have an end and possess the nature of works. The ancients, knowing this true sacrifice, did not use to offer the *agnihotṛ*'[185] Here the sacrifice is rejected and replaced by generally unconscious activities which may be performed consciously (as for instance in *prāṇāyāma*, in the daily *sandhyā* or in elaborate developments of the Yoga-dar-śana which have preserved characteristics of a ritual act).

182 Mahadevan, l.c.; Ranade o.c. 7-8.

183 It seems that Ranade sees too much of an inner sacrifice in the text; he says: "Even so early as at the time of the *Chāndogya*, the efficacy of the 'inner sacrifice' had come to be definitely recognised" and continues with a translation of the passage which is somewhat free and modernised; 'our real sacrifice consists in making oblations to the *prāṇa* within us. One who does not know this inner sacrifice, even if he were to go in for a formal sacrifice, throws oblation merely on ashes. On the other hand, he who knows this inner sacrifice is relieved of his sins as surely as wool is burnt in a flame of fire. Knowing this inner sacrifice, even if a man were to do acts of charity for a Caṇḍāla, he may verily be regarded as having sacrificed to the Universal soul'.

184 2.5.

185 Transl. R.R. Mitra and E.B. Cowell, Adyar, 1932, 298.

More interesting than the rejection of sacrifice is its preservation and transformation as meditation. Here the efficacy is preserved as in the ritual act. Before discussing this further a passage of the *Muṇḍakopaṇiṣad*[186] may be mentioned, where the sacrifice is termed inefficient and useless: 'Perishable (and) transient are verily the eighteen supporters[187] of the sacrifice, on whom, it is said the interior work depends. The fools who consider this (work) as the highest (object of man), undergo again even decay and death.... Fancying oblations and pious gifts (to lead to) the highest (object of man) fools do not know anything (as the cause of the) good. Having enjoyed (the fruit of) their works, on the high place of heaven, which they gained by their act they enter again this world or one that is lower.'[188] Here the inferiority of *karma* is evident; whoever depends on *karma* will be reborn.[189] In order to understand this we should know what *jñāna*, which replaces *karma*, really signifies.

Śaṅkara in the commentary on the *Brahmasūtras* does not go far in denouncing sacrifice.[190] His quotations are taken from *Agnirahasyam*, i.e., the tenth book of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, which speaks about: 'fire-altars, made of mind (*manas*), built of mind (*manas*)'[191] or: 'built of knowledge (*vidyā*)'.[192] An entire sacrifice is to be performed in the mind only: 'With mind only (*manasaiva*) they are established, with mind only they are piled, with mind only the cups were taken, with mind the *udgātṛ* praised, with mind the *hotṛ* recited; whatever work is done at the sacrifice, whatever sacrificial work was done as consisting of mind, by mind only, as those fire-altars made of mind, piled by mind'.[193] Śaṅkara shows that this mental sacrifice is not part of the sacrifice (so that mental acts could be substituted for the actual act) but constitutes itself a subject of meditation (*vidyā*): 'For the text expressly asserts that "they are built of knowledge only"......' and: 'these *agnis* are indeed knowledge-piled only.'

186 1.2. 7-10; also referred to by Ranade and Mahadevan, 11. o.c.
187 Namely, according to Śaṅkara, sixteen priests, the sacrificer and his wife.
188 Transl. E. Roer, Adyar, 1931, 148-150.
189 See above, II. 3: 50.
190 *BSB*. 3.3.44-50.
191 *Agnīnarkānmanomayānmanaścitaḥ*
192 *Vidyācita*.
193 Ad. *BS*. 3.3.47 and 49.

Śaṅkara then does not want to replace the actual sacrifice by meditation, as one could have expected. But this is characteristic. He does not reject, but subordinates. Similarly the Mīmāṁsā view is not rejected, but allotted its proper place. The ritual act may lead to *svarga*, heaven, the highest goal of Mīmāṁsā and of the greater part of Vedic literature. But the Advaitic goal, *mokṣa*, which is higher in a way to be specified below, can only be reached through *jñāna*. According to Advaita, in the empirical level of our everyday experience Mīmāṁsā, and (according to later *Advaitins*) in particular the Bhāṭṭa-school of Mīmāṁsā, holds:[194] *Vyavalvāre Bhāṭṭa-nayaḥ*.[195]

In the same context reference is made to a mental (*mānasa*) cup which is offered also meritally: 'all the rites connected with that cup, viz., taking it up, putting it down in its place, offering the liquid in it, taking up the remaining liquid, the priests inviting one another to drink the reminder, and the drinking, all these rites the text declares to be mental only, i.e., to be done in thought only'.[196] In a note Thibaut refers to other texts where this occurs.[197] Śaṅkara also refers to the above quoted passage of the *Kauṣītakī Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣad*, where reference is made (in his words) to an 'imaginary *agnihotra* consisting of speech and breath'.[198]

Throughout the Upaniṣad texts are utilized as prescripts which enjoin meditations. But the substitution of meditation for the ritual act must also have been influenced by the fact that many of the sacrifices required materials which only a wealthy person like a king could afford. Meditation gradually takes the place of the ritual act and comes to share in all its particular powers. Though the inner sacrifice tends to reject the ordinary sacrifice, it preserves in itself all the significant characteristics of the latter. Meditation is magical in its efficacy[199] and constitutes one of the important modes of being.

194 See below II. 13.
195 See Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, 357, n. 4.-'Bhaṭṭa' refers to the school of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa.
196 Transl. Thibaut II. 261.
197 *Ibid.* n. 2; 'Cf. Tāṇḍya Brāh. IV. 9; Taitt. Saṁh. VII.3.1.'
198 *vākprāṇamayo, gnihotra.*
199 See below II. 9.

For these reasons the act of meditation must be considered in greater detail: it is the gateway to Advaita. We propose to do this in the three following sections: in the first section (7) more examples will be given of meditations on sacrificial acts which will lead to the central meditation on Brahman; it will then be seen in which respect meditation itself is transcended; in the second section (8) certain conclusions regarding sacrifice, meditation and knowledge in Pūrva and Uttara Mīmāṁsā and thought and action in general will be considered; and in the third section (9) an investigation will be made into concepts of meditation and knowledge, occurring in different forms in different texts, while the thesis of their magical efficacy will be questioned. The middle section of these three sections (8) will also consider the relation of Advaita in this respect to some other systems of thought in India.

7. *Meditation - pariṇāma - saguṇabrahman*

Large portions of Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahmasūtras* interpret texts dealing with sacrifices as giving injunctions to meditate on sacrifices or portions thereof (e.g., the third *pāda* of the third *adhyāya*). Everyone who reads the bhāṣya must pay attention to these portions, including those who are only looking for the so-called purely philosophical portions. The latter often maker the mistake of having a preconceived idea of what philosophy is (an idea which is generally formed on modern lines, even in the case of those who try to follow the tradition, the *sanātana dharma*) -and imposing that upon the text. But the text does not indicate which are the so-called philosophical portions and which are not. Thus a discrimination and evaluation of the text is forced upon us, which is as difficult to justify as Śaṅkara's own evaluation of different Upaniṣadic passages, for instance their being of different value when dealing with *saprapañca* and *niṣprapañca* expositions.[200] Declaring some portions, for instance, those dealing with the interpretation of texts or with sacrifices, less important from a 'philosophical' point of view, disregards that the *bhāṣya* includes those portions (though it may assign them their proper place) and is as such different from Western ways of thinking. Such anachronistic attitude underrates the supreme importance attached to *śabdapramāṇa*.

200 Cf. Hiriyanna, *Outlines*, 59 sq.

The exposition attempted here does not present Advaita as a system of philosophy with a modern structure, resting upon an epistemological basis, etc. This does not mean that we criticise Śaṅkara's Advaita as being not 'up to the standard of modern philosophy' - which would be a somewhat ridiculous presumption. It means, on the contrary, that we are able and willing to abstain not only from modern philosophical ideas, but also from their high evaluation. Though an epistemological approach would be quite in accordance with some later works on Advaita, this approach itself belongs to a phase of thought which seems to be superseded in the West.[201]. Shortly, to present Advaita as a modern system of thought is not paying it a compliment, but betrays the presence of an implicit high evaluation of some modern systems of thought.

It is of little value to attempt to show that Advaita is rationalistic, when this attempt is based upon an implicit faith in reason, as may occur in some later philosophies which the investigator happens to prefer. But it can be valuable to show without any implicit or explicit evaluation whether Advaita is rationalistic or not, and to compare it with other doctrines, rationalistic or not, ultimately investigating in this way the attitude towards rationality which is implicit in contemporary philosophy.[202]

These remarks formulate only some of the principles of scholarly research. But it is not superfluous to formulate them when dealing with Advaita, where so much of the literature (implicitly or explicitly) praises or blames or tries to establish the superiority or inferiority of the system. Just like the sage according to the *Gītā*, every philosopher and scholar has to strive for the attainment of *sarvakarmaphalatyāga* - the abandonment of the fruit of all works.

We should attempt to find in Śaṅkara's works some data concerning the relationship between meditation on a sacrificial act on the one hand and sacrifice itself on the other hand. It is stated that meditations, such as the Udgītha, are based upon the sacri-

201 In different ways in the existential as well as in the logical current which are the characteristical achievements of contemporary philosophy.

202 See the author's *Remarks on rationality and irrationality in East and West.*

fices along with which they are prescribed, but are not dependent on them and are therefore valid separately.[203] Thus meditations are more general than sacrifices. Accordingly, meditations are not restricted to particular *śākhās* (branches, schools) of the Veda, but belong to all *śākhās*: 'the *vidyās* mentioned refer to the *udgītha* and so on belonging to all *śākhās* because the text speaks only of the *udgītha* and so on in general.'[204]

Some scriptural passages with which the *bhāṣyahāra* deals enjoin ritual actions and others meditations, for instance the meditation on Brahman. There is no conflict when different texts prescribe different sections. According to Śaṅkara the *karmakāṇḍa* of the Veda enjoins a 'plurality of works' (*karmabahutva*). But he asks[205] whether there can also be a plurality in Brahman (*brahmabahutva*). In this case we are not dealing with an injunction to perform an act, but with an injunction to meditate which is similar to an instruction. In the passage concerned, Śaṅkara refers back to his commentary on one of the beginning *sūtras* (*tattusamanvayāt*),[206] which states that 'the knowledge of Brahman (*brahmavijñāna*) is produced by passages which treat of Brahman as an existing accomplished thing and thus do not aim at enjoining anything'.[207] Here what probably was originally an injunction to meditate has become a teaching-but a kind of teaching which seems to be as 'magically' loaded as sacrifice and meditation themselves. The *sūtra* referred to might be profitably consulted before this discussion is continued.

This *sūtra: tat tu samanvayāt*, 'but that because it is connected' is one of the important sources of the entire Vedānta and will occupy us below. In the commentary Śaṅkara discusses the question whether scriptural texts enjoin action or simply convey information or knowledge. The Pūrva Mīmāṁsā view, to which he refers is clear and seems plausible. Śabara says, commenting upon the first *sūtra* of Jaimini: 'the object of the Vedas is evident: it is to give information with regard to action (*karmāvabodhana*)'.

203 Śaṅkara ad. 3.3.42.
204 Ad. 3.3.55.
205 Ad. 3.1.1.
206 1.1.4.
207 Transl. Thibaut II. 165.

The scriptural texts prompt action (*pravṛtti*) or prevent action (*nivṛtti*). This means that a text is not purely informative in a general, impersonal and as it were scholarly way. The *pūruapakṣhij*, Śaṅkara combats,[208] is explicit about this: 'If the Vedānta texts were considered to have no reference to injunctions of actions,[209] but to contain statements about mere (accomplished) things, just as if one were saying. 'the earth comprises seven islands',[210] 'that king is marching on', they would be purportless, because then they could not possibly be connected with something to be shunned or endeavoured after'.[211] Here all purely *indicative* sentences are rejected. According to the *pūrvapakṣin*, Vedānta texts are injunctions to meditate and this is a highly purposeful act: 'From the devout meditation (*upāsanā*) on this Brahman there results as its fruit (*phalam*) final release (*mokṣa*) which although not to be discerned (*aḍṛṣṭa*) in the ordinary way, is discerned (*ḍṛṣṭa*) by means of the śāstra'.[212]

Plausible as all this may seem, Śaṅkara disagrees entirely with it ('to all this, we, the Vedāntins, make the following reply'). He establishes the *siddhānta* view, that *brahmavijyñāna* is not fruit of any action, not even of (the act of) meditation. Texts dealing with Brahman do not enjoin but inform and convey knowledge.[213]

Regarding *brahmabahutva* Śaṅkara says: 'as Brahman is one and of uniform nature, it certainly cannot be maintained that the Vedānta-texts, aim at establishing a plurality in Brahman comparable to the plurality of works'.[214] 'If it should be assumed that the different Vedānta-texts aim at teaching different cognitions of Brahman, it would follow that only one cognition could be the

208 The *Ācāryadeśīya* according to the *Bhāmatī*, the *vṛttikāra* according to the *Ratnaprabhā* (L. Renou. *Prolégomènes au Vedānta*, Paris 1951, 21, n. 2).

209 *kartavyavidhyananupraveśē*.

210 *saptadvīpā, vasumatī*: an example from Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*.

211 Ad. 1.1.4, transl. Thibaut I, 25.

212 Ad. 1.1.4.

213 The old magical view, superseded by Śaṅkara, is alive in contemporary India among those who uphold a spirituality on the basis of purposeful knowledge while rejecting all 'useless' indicative information - thus interpreting the Indian tradition and deprecating Western philosophy, assumed to deal only with knowledge like 'the earth comprises seven islands', which does not lead to liberation.

214 Id., Transl. Thibaut II, 184.

right one while all others were mistaken, and this would lead to a general distrust of all Vedānta'.[215]

At this point an important distinction is introduced. Scripture teaches that some meditations on Brahman have, like acts, various results: 'some of them have visible results, others unseen results, and others again-as conducive to the springing up of perfect knowledge-have for their result release by successive steps'.[216] Therefore it is impossible to hold the opinion that all the texts teach only one cognition of Brahman. This difficulty is solved by a discrimination which is rightly famous and characteristic of Advaita:[217] that between the *saguṇabrahman* and the *nirguṇabrahman* (the qualified and the unqualified Brahman).[218] Śaṅkara's final view is therefore that 'devout meditations on the qualified Brahman may, like acts, be either identical or different';[219] whereas knowledge of the *nirguṇabrahman* can only be one, for the reasons stated above.

Thus we have arrived at the view, that in the scriptures different acts are prescribed; different meditations may be prescribed on the *saguṇabrahman*; but only one cognition exists of the *nirguṇabrahman*. There is a certain progress when one proceeds from action to meditation and from meditation to knowledge, while considering respectively the sacrifice, the *saguṇabrahman*, and the *nirguṇabrahman*. This constitutes a series of entities of increasing value, culminating in the highest value; and accordingly graded conceptions of the ultimate being.

215 *Ibid.*

216 Id., Transl. II, 185.

217 Especially as conflicting with Viśiṣṭādvaita: Rāmānuja combats at length the doctrine of the 'two Brahmans'; see e.g. P.N. Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita*, Adyar 1946, Chap. III, 61-92; or the first objection of the sixty-six objections against Advaita of Veṅkaṭanātha in his *Śatadūṣaṇī* (See Dasgupta III, 306).

218 To speak about a *nirguṇa* entity involves logical difficulties, just as to speak about the ineffable in Western philosophy. Vyāsa-tīrtha attacked Advaita for it; if Brahman is *nirguṇa*, it becomes *śūnya* 'void' (and Śaṅkara becomes a *śūnyavādin*: see below II, 13: 136, n. 447.. Cf. also Dasgupta IV, 312). But Śaṅkara had complained already that Brahman was 'regarded by persons of dull intellect as *śūnya*' (*Chāndogyopaniṣadbhāṣya* 8, Introduction; transl. 414).

219 Ad. 1.1.4, *ibid*,

Concrete examples follow in further sūtras.[220] Commenting upon 'Bliss and other (qualities) as belonging to the subject of the qualities (have to be attributed to Brahman everywhere)'[221] Śaṅkara establishes the view that qualities like *ānanda*, 'bliss, delight', and the other qualities which belong to the subject (*pradhāna*) are all to be understood in each place (*sarvatra*), because the subject referred to is Brahman and is one and non-different. These are evidently qualities (*dharmāḥ*) which do not literally qualify and have to be 'attributed to' (in as far as we can speak of attribution) the *nirguṇabrahman*-a term which Śaṅkara, however, does not mention in this text because of the somewhat embarassing connection of the unqualified with qualities. The next *sūtra*, however, '(Such qualities as) joy being its head and so on have no force (for other passages); for increase and decrease belong to plurality (only)'[222] is interpreted as referring to qualities, in which lower and higher degrees can be distinguished[223] and which therefore refer to the *saguṇabrahman* and have no universal application. They have no validity for other meditations on Brahman and do not belong to the unqualified highest Brahman (*nirguṇa parabrahman*). But the following *sūtra*: 'But other (attributes are valid for all passages relative to Brahman), the purport being the same'[224] refers again to attributes such as bliss and so on and belong again to the *nirguṇabrahman* which is one. But Śaṅkara adds: 'those attributes are mentioned with a view to knowledge only, not to meditation'.[225] In the next *sūtra* qualities are again supposed to refer to the *saguṇabrahman* 'for the purpose of pious meditation (*dhyāna*)'.

Let us for the moment leave aside the purely metaphysical question-a question which has occupied religious thinkers both of the East and of the West-of how far we can deal with a nirguṇa entity (to which even according to Śaṅkara himself still the qualities such as 'bliss and so on' refer). We observe that meditation (*dhyāna*) may lead to *saguṇabrahman* but not to *nirguṇabrahman*

220 3.3. 11-13, etc.
221 *ānandādayaḥ pradhānasya*: 3.3.11
222 *priyaśirastvādyaprāptirupacayāpacayau hi bhede* 3.3.1.2.
223 *upacitâpacitagunatva*.
224 *itare tvarthasāmānyāt*: 3.3.13.
225 *ad hoc*. transl. Thibaut II, 204.

which belongs to the domain of pure knowledge. Though the philosophical development kas proceeded from the sacrifice to meditation with knowledge as its fruit, Śaṅkara's thesis is that there is a knowledge which is independent of previous action or meditation and which arises spontaneously (*svābhāvika*). We will examine the difference between meditation and knowledge and their relationship.

The most important distinction is that knowledge (*jñāna*) is not subordinate to action (*kratvartha*), as meditation is. Mere knowledge (*kevala vidyā*) effects the purpose of man (*puruṣārtha*, i.e. *mokṣa*) and is independent (*svatantra*).[226] This knowledge does not lead to mokṣa, but constitutes mokṣa itself, mainly because it is knowledge in which there is no difference between subject and object, as we shall see below. There is no establishment of a link and no identification, and this knowledge can therefore no longer be called magical: it is not effective but constitutes its own purpose. The texts 'establish the fact that the so-called release doffers from all the fruits of action (*karmaphalavilakṣaṇa*).'[227] That this knowledge is release itself points back to the sacrificial background; but that it springs from itself and is not a fruit of action or meditation shows that it is a new concept.

That *mokṣa* is entirely independent from action is brought out clearly by Padmapāda in his *Pañcapādikā*, in the gloss on the commentary on the *sūtra*: *tattusamanvayāt*.[228] It is summarised by Venkataramiah in his 'conspectus' as follows:[229] 'Any *karma* to be purposeful must originate something (*utpatti*), secure something (*āpti*), bring about some changes (*vikāra*), or effect purification (*saṁskāra*). Now since *karma* is incapable of effecting *mokṣa* in any of these ways there is no scope for it, i.e., there is not even the remotest connection of *mokṣa* with action'.

Śaṅkara's view underscores that meditation also is an act and therefore unfit to be the basis of knowledge. This is stated in

226 See ad. 3.4.1, 16, etc.
227 Ad. 1.1.4, transl. I. 28.
228 *Pañcapādikā*, 9.10 (22-26).
229 Transl. D. Venkataramiah, Baroda 1948, 399. Cf. Mahadevan, Philosophy of Advaita 240 (*Vivaraṇaprameyasaṁgraha*) and Sureśvara, *Saṁbandhavārtika*, 236.

several passages in the same context, for example: 'The meditation, for instance, on man and woman as fire, which is founded on *CU* 5.7.1; 8.1; .... is on account of its being a Vedic statement merely an action and dependent on man; that conception of fire, on the other hand, which refers to the well known (real) fire, is neither dependent on Vedic statements nor on man, but only on a real thing which is an object of perception; it is therefore knowledge and not an action'[230] (note here the rejection of magical identification); or: 'The meditations on the other hand are themselves acts, and as such capable of a special injunction; hence there is no reason why a special result should not be enjoined for those meditations which are based on sacrificial acts'.[231] The term *jñāanakriyā* is used for 'aact of meditation' (not 'act of knowledge').[232]

The examination of the development from sacrifice to the act of meditation and from meditation to knowledge and in particular to that knowledge which is no longer dependent on it, leads to three conclusions: (I) Actions are generally performed on the ground of Vedic injunction, while knowledge of Brahman is independent of actions. The highest knowledge (*paramavidyā*) is independent of the Vedic injunctions: '*knowledge which has the existant Brahman as its object is not dependent on Vedic injunction*'.[232a] Scripture may lead to the knowledge of Brahman, but this knowledge does not depend on it. Thereby Advaita does not become a doctrine which might be called *avaidika*, as it accepts the authority of the Veda and *Īśvara* is the source of scripture.[233] This doctrine safeguards the purity, independence and transcendence of the cognition of Brahman and therefore of Brahman itself.[234]

(II) Whereas a causal series of karmic processes can reach most goals, including the felicity of heaven, *svarga* (the highest goal in the Pūrva Mīmāṁsā); there is a highest goal which is

230 Ad. 1.1.4 transl. I. 35.
231 Ad. 3.3.42, transl. II. 256.
232 Venkatararniah, o.c. 309.
232a *bhūtabrahmātmaviṣayamapijñānaṁ na codanātantram*: Ad. 1.1.4., Transl. I. 35.
233 *śāstrayonitvāt*: 1.1.3.
234 See below, third conclusion: 87-8,

entirely transcendent and which can never be the result of activities as it is beyond all causes and effects. This is *mokṣa*. Whereas all causal activity proceeds step by step and is a process of transformation (*pariṇāma*), this highest release is a sudden realization which manifests itself spontaneously. It does not change our mode of being, but it shows the existence of a more authentic[235] mode of being. Since Advaita rejects the reality of transformation and change, *mokṣa* is eternal (*nitya*). It is not the result of an act or the effect of a cause which is bound to appear at a certain moment in time: *mokṣa* is absolutely real (*pāramārthika*), fixed (*kūṭastha*),[236] eternal (*nitya*), omnipresent (*sarvavyāpin*) like the atmosphere, free from all modifications (*sarvavikriyārahita*), eternally self-sufficient (*nityatṛpta*), not composed of parts (*niravayava*) and of self-luminous nature (*svayam-jyotiḥsvabhāva*). That bodiless state (*aśarīratva*), to which merit and demerit (*dharmādharma*) with their consequences (*saha kāryeṇa*) and threefold time (*kālatraya*) do not apply, is called *mokṣa*. This definition agrees with scriptural passages such as the following:[237] 'different from merit and demerit (*dharmād-anyatraadharmād-anyatra*), different from effect and cause (*kṛtakṛtāt*), different from past and future (*bhūtācca bhavyācca*)'.[238] Sureśvara says that action is not eternal (*anitya*) but knowledge is eternally attained (*nityaprāpta*).[239]

As the state of *mokṣa* is beyond all actions and their fruit beyond all causal relation and beyond time, nothing 'happens' when somebody 'attains' release. Hence,

> 'there is none in bondage, none aspiring for wisdom, no seeker of liberation (*mumukṣu*) and none liberated (*mukta*)'

as Gauḍapāda has already said.[240] That a like verse occurs in

235 '*eigentlich*'.
236 Possibly of Buddhist origin (*kūṭattho*) and occurring in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (see Renou, *Prolégomènes*, 25, n. 53).
237 *Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.14.
238 Ad. 1.1.4, transl. Thibaut I, 28 with some alterations in accordance with Renou, o.c. 25.
239 *Saṁbandhavārtika*, 369 b; cf. 300.
240 Kārikā, 2.32.

Nāgārjuna[241] need not imply that Gauḍapāda has taken it from him (a historical possibility of relative philosophical importance)[242] but reminds us of a wider context: in a less revolutionary but perhaps more subtle way than the Buddhists, Śaṅkara goes beyond the sacrifice without abolishing it. This is itself a manifestion of the predilection for the continuous as the 'substance of tradition' in Hinduism. For sacrifice is connected with the doctrines of *karma*, cause and temporal action. Śaṅkara overcomes the sacrificial mentality by means of a knowledge which is no longer a temporal act (as meditation is) and which transcends the realm of *karma* and causation. In this way we arrive at Brahman as the new concept of being, realised by *mokṣa* as the new intuition of being. Śaṅkara however does not reject *karma* and causality but accepts them in subordinate position.

(III) The third conclusion enables us to introduce in an existentially and phenomenologically justifiable way the Absolute, Brahman. In the Veda this term may have denoted a kind of power connected with the sacrifice and manifesting itself as sacred or magical word.[243] Its manifestation results from the ritual act and appears magically loaded. As a result of the ritual act, which creates and discovers being, Brahman is being itself. In Śaṅkara Brahman is likewise not an abstract concept but the goal itself, i.e., *mokṣa*. The above exposition can be called existential and phenomenological in the sense that it starts with the mode of our being which is sacrifice and proceeds to the mode of our being which is knowledge or *mokṣa*, without referring to external, i.e., phenomenologically unaccessible entities. The text dealing with *mokṣa* quoted above, proceeds as follows: 'It (i.e. *mokṣa*) is therefore the same as Brahman,[244] in the enquiry (*jijñāsā*) into which we are at present engaged' (Cf. the first *sūtra: athāto brahmajijñāsā*). Therefore Brahman is beyond all *karma*,[245] beyond all causality and beyond time. This means that it is not the result of an act, not even of the act of meditation; that it is

241 *Madhyamaka*, 16.5.
242 Cf. Mahadevan, *Gauḍapāda*.
243 See T. Gonda, *Notes on Brahman*, Utrecht 1950 and the literature referred to.
244 *atastadbrahma*.
245 Cf. *Ratnaprabhā, ad hoc*, quoted by Thibaut 28, n. 2.

neither an effect, nor a cause e.g. of the universe (as we will see below);[246] and that it is the ever unchanging timeless.

Mokṣa or Brahman is *nitya*, 'eternal' and this eternity excludes all change and transformation (*pariṇāma*). It is, as Śaṅkara remarks, not eternal in the less proper sense in which some things are conceived as 'eternal, although changing' (*pariṇāmānitya*), for instance the *guṇas* in the Sāṁkhya system.[247] For the *guṇas* are in a perpetual process of always uniting, separating and uniting again, and in this sense the Sāṁkhya professes the eternity of the world (*pariṇāmanityatva*),[248] as Advaita professes the perpetuity of *saṁsāra*. But Brahman is in Advaita eternal without any modifications (*sarvavikriyārahita*).

The doctrine that Brahman is the only reality signifies that *mokṣa* is not only more authentic than ordinary experience, but also shows the illusoriness of ordinary experience. It is an important but philosophically unsoluble question, whether this doctrine is the outcome of speculation or of the experience (*anubhava*) of *mokṣa* itself. Against the second view it might be objected that such an unqualified experience in which subject and object are one is not likely to have the character of a possible cause the outcome of which may be any metaphysical doctrine.[249] In support of the view that the basis of Advaita is speculative it can moreover be argued that the doctrine of the sole reality of Brahman follows from the view that the Absolute is unqualified. For the relation of Brahman to any other reality would affect its *nirguṇatva*. The fact that we can understand Advaita and follow the developments of its thought and arguments may also show that its basis is speculation.

But even if the basis is speculation it need not be exclusively speculation. For speculation can lead to a consistent philosophical doctrine but cannot establish truth. If the basis of Advaita were mere speculation nobody could be sincerely convinced of its truth, We may by philosophical means arrive at the conclusion that

246 II. 14.
247 Ad. 1.1.4.
248 See e.g. Dasgupta I, 243-245.
249 See below II. 15: 159.

Advaita is a consistent system without being convinced of its being true. The experience is decisive. As long as we do not possess it we can neither affirm nor deny its validity.

In accordance with this Śaṅkara generally shows in his commentaries the consistency of his doctrines without attempting to prove them by referring to the experience which tradition attributes to him. There may be one passage in the *Sūtrabhāṣya* where he refers indirectly to his own experience, though we cannot be certain even here. This passage, mentioned by Mahadevan,[250] deals with the concept of *Jīvan-mukti* and expresses with an insistence which seems based upon personal experience that the experience of the *Jīvan-mukta* cannot be contested: 'How can one contest the heart-felt condition of another as possessing Brahman-knowledge, even though bearing a body?'[251]

Summarizing we can say that meditation is considered an act like sacrifice while knowledge is not; that acts and meditations can be many while knowledge is one; that acts and meditations may have several purposes and objects, including *saguṇabrahman*, while *nirguṇabrahman* can only be the object of knowledge or rather knowledge itself (because in this knowledge subject and object are identical and therefore identical with knowledge itself) which is *mokṣa*. Such knowledge is given in some Vedic texts, which are not injunctions or prescriptions to act but are of a purely indicative character. This knowledge arises spontaneously, is not the fruit of any action, not even of meditation, is not effect of a cause (or cause of an effect) and is eternal. The same applies to *mokṣa* and Brahman, which are identical with it and with each other. The reaction against sacrifice has also entailed a certain independence with regard to the Vedic authority, which is accepted as such but which is not the cause of the knowledge which is *mokṣa*, the *śāstra* being itself founded in *Īśvara*.

All these topics are closely interwoven and interconnected and this is a sign of the unity of thought reached and achieved in the Advaitic doctrine on the basis of a tradition which does not at all make such a unified impression. It is difficult to indicate at the

250 T.M.P. Mahadevan, *Outlines of Hinduism*, Bombay 1956, 143-144.
251 4.1.15.

same time all meanings and to develop the ideas in all directions. This is as we saw in the first part[252] due to the 'circular procedure' which is characteristic of philosophy. Some of the topics already dealt with have therefore to be developed somewhat further. The next section (Section 8), will once again deal with *karma* and *jñāna* but in a different context; it will also touch upon an instructive and interesting comparison with another 'revolt against karma', which has a Western counterpart. The section following (Section 9) will study magical efficacy of meditation and the concept of *jñāna* by means of a discussion of their terminology and occurrence in several texts.

8. *Action - meditation - knowledge: Advaita and other systems*

The term *karman* characterises the atmosphere of the beginning of Vedic literature. It denotes any action which is conceived as causation and it can be applied to different levels, which coincided in the beginning. It denotes everyday action consciously applied on the basis of causal connections which are generally observed (or, with a philosophical critique, which manifest themselves to the observer): every action establishes a cause desired for the sake of an effect. It denotes the sum total of activities which result after death in a certain status leading to a new life; and lastly it denotes certain magically efficient acts, the sacrifices, which lead to various desirable results. In the last two cases it is not always obvious what constitutes the substratum of the causal connection (e.g. *dharma* and *adharma* or *puṇya* and *pāpa* subsisting after death). For this reason Prabhākara and his followers in Mīmāṁsā call the result of sacrificial acts *apūrva* (litt. 'never before').[253] This *apūrva* is a typically magical concept and by rejecting it Śaṅkara shows the magical and unintelligible character of all activity, even there where the result is immediately present so that no *apūrva* is needed. The evidence for Advaita, the *jīvan-mukta*, 'wbo is released while embodied', is dṛṣṭa, 'visible', whereas the proof for Mīmāṁsā, *apūrva*, is *adṛṣṭa* 'invisible'. Sureśvara therefore says: 'The Vedānta-texts have seen fruit (*dṛṣṭa*-

252 1.4.D.
253 Hiriyanna, *Outlines*, 327. Cf. L. Renou in: *Journal Asiatique*, 233 (1941-42), 126-7.

phala), whereas *svarga* or the result of *agnihotra* is an unseen fruit (*adṛṣṭaphala*)'.[254] Elsewhere he calls *jñāna* a *dṛṣṭārtha*.[255]

The *Karmakāṇḍa* deals with all these aspects of *karman* but the *Jñānakāṇḍa* supplements it. The difference between the two corresponds to the difference between Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads, between sacrifice or action in general and knowledge (with meditation as a link between the two) and between Pūrva and Uttara Mīmāṁsās. In Pūrva Mīmāṁsā Vedic injunctions are interpreted as referring to action only; in Advaita knowledge is *Vastu-tantra* dependent on the thing and not on injunction. One school of Pūrva Mīmāṁsā is nearer to Advaita: the school of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa. Whereas the rival school of Prabhākara holds that scriptural statements point only at things to be accomplished (*sādhya*), the school of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa believes that scriptural statements may either point to *sādhya* or else to *siddha*, an existent and accomplished thing. Both schools agree that action is the major mode of our being referred to in the Veda and prescribed there. Even if the existence of passages which merely refer to existent things (*siddha*) is recognized, these are looked upon as *arthavāda*, 'explanatory passages', i.e., passages explaining the injunctions. In the context of any *siddha* passage another passage can be found which prescribes an action and to which the *siddha* can be related. It is obvious that this practice may become artificial when dealing with passages like the famous '*tat tvam asi*.'

The Advaita view is that the Vedic propositions refer to both *siddha* and *sādhya*, but that the *siddha* statements are the most important. We saw already instances of the fact that Śaṅkara does not reject, but subordinates. The same occurs in this context. Whereas the activity which is prescribed in *śruti* is supposed to be able to help us and to lead us to heaven (*svarga*) and prosperity (*abhyudaya*),[256] Śaṅkara holds that the *siddha* passages are not connected with any action but establish the knowledge of Brahman, which is *mokṣa* and the highest good (*niḥśreyasa*).[257] Such *siddha*

254 *Saṁbandhavārtika*, 275/6; cl 341, Transl. Mahadevan.
255 Id. 296, with a reference to *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*, 2.2.8.
256 Ad. 1.1.1. The *Ratnaprabhā* calls this the abode of the *pitṛyāṇa* (Renou, *Prolégomènes*, 7, n. 6). Cf. above II. 3.
257 'The good beyond which there is no other good': identical with *mokṣa* according to the *Ratnaprabhā* (Renou. id. 8, n. 1).

passages treat directly of matters of fact (*bhūta-vastu*), which is especially important in *mahāvākyas* like 'tat tvam asi'. The relative validity of the Mīmāṁsaka point of view is expressed in the saying quoted above: *vyāvahāre Bhāṭṭa-nayaḥ*, 'in the level of everyday experience the opinion of the Bhāṭṭa holds'.[258]

It may be lastly remarked that Advaita remains close to this Mīmāṁsaka point of view in as far as even these purely indicative passages are of importance only in as far as they embody the knowledge which is *mokṣa*. They are not of purely theoretical interest, as are greater portions of Western philosophy in certain respects.[259]

It is clear that according to Śaṅkara the Pūrva and Uttara Mīmāṁsās are not conflicting views but merely refer to different realms. The higher goal is that for which the Uttara Mīmāṁsā-unstrivingly-strives. It must be remembered however[260] that Uttara Mīmāṁsā is in certain respects a continuation of Pūrva Mīmāṁsā. Advaita has developed on the basis of Pūrva Mīmāṁsā and it can be rightly said that 'Śaṅkara's work is entirely pervaded by Mīmāṁsā'.[261] Notwithstanding the explicit differences between the two Mīmāṁsās, it is possible to trace several common points. This is also the view of Pūrva Mīmāṁsā itself.[262] A comparable view is advocated by Viśiṣṭādvaita as against Advaita: 'The two Mīmāṁsās are really integral parts of one systematic whole, and their object is to lead the seeker after truth step by step till he ascends to his home in the absolute. Rāmānuja, following Bodhāyana, therefore thinks that the entire Mīmāṁsā Śāstra.... has a definite spiritual meaning and value .... The *Vedavādin* who follows *karma* .... realizes its perishing value and tries to become the *Brahmavādin*. The transition from *karma-vicāra* to *Brahmavicāra* thus involves temporal sequence as well as logical consequence' says Srinivasachari.[263] The same opinion is defended by the Viśiṣṭādvaitin Vātsya Varada, about whom Dasgupta remarks: 'Vātsya Varada holds that the study of Vedic injunction and the

258 For the last paragraph see Hiriyanna, *Outlines*, 318-319, 357-8.
259 See above II, 7, 81, n. 213.
260 See above II, 1.
261 'Śaṅkara est tout pénétré de Mīmāṁsā': Renou, Id. III,
262 See Jha, *Pūrva Mīmāṁsa*, 7-9.
263 Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita*, 135-36.

inquiry relating to Brahman form the parts of one unified scripture, i.e. the latter follows or is a continuation of the former; and he mentions Bodhāyana in his support'.[264]

The word *atha* with which the *Brahmasūtra* commences (*athāto brahmajijñāsā*) is not an argument in favour of the opinion that Uttara Mīmāṁsā is merely a continuation of Pūrva Mīmāṁsā. For the Pūrva Mīmāṁsā *sūtra* starts in the same manner (*athāto dharmajijñāsā*). Śaṅkara and Śabara commenting upon the first sūtra of Jaimini and Bādarāyaṇa respectively interpret *atha* in the same manner: it denotes immediate sequence and signifies that both *jijñāsās* follow immediately upon the recitation of the Veda (*Vedādhyāyana*). Śaṅkara denies that *Brahmajijñāsā* can only take place after *dharmajijñāsā*: 'For a man who has read the Vedānta portions of the Veda it is possible to enter on the inquiry into Brahman even before engaging in the inquiry into *dharma*'. The reason is of course that no action can give access to Brahman: 'the knowledge of active religious duty has for its fruit transitory felicity, and that again depends on the performance of religious acts. The inquiry into Brahman, on the other hand, has for its fruit eternal bliss and does not depend on the performance of any acts'.[265]

There were also important teachers, not only amongst the Mīmāṁsakas but also amongst the Vedāntins, who apparently disagreed with Śaṅkara that only *jñāna* effects *mokṣa*. In Mīmāṁsā, through Vedāntic influence attention was also paid to *mokṣa* as a higher aim than *svarga*. But it was held that the seekers for *mokṣa* should not abstain from all *karma* but only from *kāmyaharma* and *pratiṣiddhakarma*, the activities leading to respectively good and bad births. Nobody can abstain from the performance of *nityakarma*; otherwise he will be disobeying the Vedic law.[266]

A combination of knowledge and works, *jñānakarmasamuccaya*, was not only held by the Mīmāṁsakas (e.g. Kumārila), but also by the Vedāntin Brahmadatta.[267] It occurs likewise in the

264 Dasgupta, III. 3.50.
265 Ad. 1.1.1. Transl. Thibaut, I, 10-11.
266 See *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*, ed. G.A. Jacob, Poona 1925, Introduction (by M. Hiriyanna), xiv.
267 Id. xxii.

Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha.[268] It is noteworthy, that also Maṇḍana Miśra was apparently a *samuccayavādin*; but not the celebrated Sureśvara[269] (the latter two were therefore not identical, notwithstanding tradition, unless there was a change of opinion which is perfectly possible),[270] who was on the contrary very clear about the difference between *karma* and *jñāna*:[271] 'He alone is eligible to the study of the Vedāntas, who has renounced all actions without residue ....'.[272] And elsewhere: 'Action is required in respect of what is to be accomplished (*sādhya*). In respect of the established (*siddha*) it is of no use.'[273] 'Knowledge removes entirely all action'[274] And more in particular about rites and about the act of meditation: 'Rites are enjoined on the man who is endowed with nescience'.[275] According to Sureśvara, Mīmāṁsā is wrong when it holds that *mokṣa* results from the injunction 'meditate' (*upāsīta*), just as *abhyudaya* results from the injunction 'perform the rite' (*kurvīṭḥ kratum*).[276] For 'the good (*śreyaḥ*) is one thing, the pleasing (*preyaḥ*) quite another'.[277] And combined: 'Nor is knowledge of one self dependent on practice (*abhyāsa*); nor is it dependent on meditation (*bhāvanā*) for the sake of release'.[278] The *jñānakarmasamuccaya-sādhana* is also explicitly mentioned and refuted in the *Aitareyopaniṣadbhāṣya* ascribed to Śaṅkara.[279]

In later Advaita a difference arises concerning the relation between *karma* and *jñāna* between the *Bhāmatī* and the *Vivaraṇa* schools. In the *Bhāmatī karma* is called a remote auxiliary (*ārādupakāraka*) for the generation of knowledge; for through its influ-

268 See Dasgupta, II. 228.
269 See, however, *Brahmasiddhi*, ed. S. Kuppuswami Sastri, Madras 1927, Introduction xlvi.
270 Id. xxiv-lvii; *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*, Introduction xxxiii. Cf. also M. Hiriyanna in *JRAS* 1923 (April), 1924 (January). See, however, Dasgupta II, 82-87.
271 Cf. *Saṁbandhavārtika*, 356 sq. against *jñānakarmasamuccaya*.
272 Id. 12.
273 Id. 90.
274 Id. 124.
275 Id. 164.
276 Id. 22.
277 Id. 24. Cf. *Kaṭhopaniṣad*. 2.1.
278 Id. 438 b.
279 Introduction, transl. D. Venkataramiah, Bangalore 1934, 2; cf. 6. The occurrence of the term may indicate that the *bhāṣya* is not genuine.

ence sin can decrease, and with the cessation of sin *sattva*, i.e., the intellect, is purified. This leads to the desire for knowledge and hence to pure knowledge.[280] That *karma* is cause of the desire for knowledge can be inferred from a text of the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*:[281] 'That (Self) the Brahmins desire to know through study of the Veda, through sacrifice, through gifts and through austerities like fasting'.[282] Following the same *śruti* Sureśvara says: 'Reciting the Vedas etc. are for the sake of generating the desire to know the inner Self (*pratyagvividiṣā*)'.[283]

According to the *Vivaraṇa* school, however, *karma* is useful in generating *vidyā* itself: it is a proximate auxiliary (*sannipatyaupakāraka*). This comes nearer to the Mīmāṁsakā view. The *Vivaraṇa* view occurs in the *Vedāntaparibhāsā*: 'And this knowledge (i.e., *brahmajñāna*) results from consumption of sin (*pāpakṣaya*), while this (in turn) results from observance of (obligatory) rites (i.e. *nityakarma*); there is thus indirect utility for rites'.[284]

At first sight it seems that a kind of *samuccayavāda* of *jñāna* and *karma* occurs in the *Bhagavad Gītā* for it teaches renunciation from the fruits of works as the means to *mokṣa* and this is not the same as *jñāna*. Moreover the *Gītā* seems to combine different tendencies. Since the *Gītā* is one of the three members of the *prasthānatraya* Śaṅkara has in his *Gītābhāya* given an Advaitic interpretation. This interpretation can neither be logically proved, nor refuted, as it declares that all non-Advaitic passages, like the *saprapañca*-passages of the Upaniṣads, refer to the *vyāvahārika*-realm (see below). This interpretation, which recon-ciles the different tendencies, is defended by some scholars,[285] but rejected by others.[286] The historical problem need not occupy us

280 *Bhamatī*, ad. 1.1.1., ed. and transl. Madras 1933, 85.
281 Quoted by Mahadevan, *Philosophy of Advaita*, 243 and by S.S. Suryanarayana Sastri in the Notes to the edition of the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, 81.
282 *BAU*. 4.4.22.
283 *Saṁbandhavārtika*, 14. Cf. also 191b-193a.
284 *Prayojanam*, 24. Cf. also Mahadevan, *ibid*., and the note *ad loc.* by Stiryanarayana Sastri. Cf. also B.K. Sengupta, *A Critique on the Vivarana School*, Calcutta 1959, and: J.F. Staal in: Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, (1960) 192-3.
285 See e.g. T.M.P. Mahadevan, *The two-fold path in the Gītā*, Kalahasti 1940.
286 For example, B, Faddegon, who has especially dealt with this problem in his book; *Śaṅkara's Gītābhaṣya toegelicht en beoordeeld*. Amsterdam 1906, the conclusion of which (115) reads: 'voor ons kan het voldoende zijn te hebben aangetoond, welkeen afstand er ligt tussen de chaotische, soms verheven en poetische gemoedswereld van den Gitadichter eenerzijds en de subtiele, soms diepzinnige doch meestal spitsvondige en ledige dogmatiek van Śaṅkara anderzijds'.

here,[287] neither the kindred problem of Śaṅkara's correctness in interpreting the *Brahmasūtras*.[288]

To give an idea of the complications which can arise in interpreting the *Gītā* we may quote a verse translated by F. Edgerton as follows:[289]

> Action arises from Brahman, know;
> And Brahman springs from the Imperishable (*akṣara*);
> Therefore the universal Brahman
> Is eternally based on worship (*yajñe pratiṣṭhitam*).

This *śloka* seems to state clearly the efficacy of *karma* for those who want to reach Brahman. But according to the traditional view, if the words are understood in their ordinary sense Brahman cannot be the highest in the *Gītā*, where *Kṛṣṇa* is an *avatāra* of Brahman (not of Viṣṇu). Therefore the terms *akṣara* and *brahma* are said to denote each a different concept according to the great commentators. But the Ācāryas differ on the other hand greatly

287 A few facts about which there can be no difference of opinion, may be recalled here. Śaṅkara quotes in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* not only the *Gītā* much less often than the *Chāndogya* or the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* (the number of quotations from the *Gītā* being about a sixth of those from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and an eight of those from the *Chāndogya*), but also less often than the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* or the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* (see Thibaut, *Index of quotations*, II, 421-430). The twelfth *adhyāya* which deals with *bhakti* is never quoted, In the 38 *ślokas* which are quoted the term *bhakti* occurs once, in an unessential context: 'at the time of death...disciplined with devotion (*bhaktyā, yuktaḥ*) and the power of discipline (*yogabalena*)....he goes to that supreme divine Spirit' (8.10), of which Śaṅkara quotes only a part ('at the time of death with unswerving thought'), leaving out the rest (ad. 4.1.12). The term *bhākta* occurs once when the sloka 7.21 is quoted completely (ad. 3.2.41); but this passage is only utilised to show that the Lord is 'not only the giver of fruits, but also the causal agent with reference to all actions whether good or evil' (transl. II. 184). An evaluation of the member of quotations can only be given after studying the quotations in the *Brahmasūtra* itself.

288 See V.S. Ghate, *The Vedānta-A study of the Bramaūtras with the Bhāsyas*, Poona, 1926 (in French-1918).

289 3. 15 (F. Edgerton, *The Bhagavad Gita*, Cambridge Mass. 1946).

in the actual interpretation of what the terms denote. Thus Śaṅkara interprets *brahma* as the Veda and *akṣara* as the *nirguṇabrahman*; Rāmānuja interprets *brahma* as *prakṛti* (hesitatingly followed by Edgerton in his note) and *akṣara* as the *jīvātman*; and Madhva accepts *brahma* in the ordinary sense whilst interpreting *akṣara* as the text of the Veda.[290]

As an example of the typical Advaitic way of interpretation another *śloka* may be quoted, which again seems nearer to Mīmāṁsā or the Brāhmaṇas than to Advaita or even *samuccayavāda*. This *śloka* is translated by Edgerton as follows

> The (sacrificial) presentation is Brahman; Brahman is the oblation;
> In the (sacrificial) fire of Brahman it is poured by Brahman;
>
> Just to Brahman must he go,
> Being concentrated upon the (sacrificial section that is Brahman).

Śaṅkara stresses the unreality of everything apart from the absolute by speaking about 'the instrument by which the oblation is poured in the fire' as being 'nothing but Brahman (*tat brahmaiva iti*). He declares in the commentary that ultimately all action is unreal: 'the action performed by him who wishes to set an example to the world is in reality no action (*karma paramārthato 'karma*), as it has been destroyed by the realisation of Brahman (*brahmabuddhyupamṛditatvāt*)'. The reason is that 'to one who realises that all is Brahman there is no action'.[291]

The *Bhagavad Gītā* presents fundamental problems. It cannot easily be maintained that it reacts against *karma* in an Advaitic way; it cannot even be said with certainty that its teaching constitutes at all a reaction against *karma*. It may be that in the *Gītā* an attempt is made to synthetise the karmic and the non-karmic trends of Indian thought. One example from later Indian thought shows that the doctrine of *karma* was also overcome in

290 Cf, R.C. Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, London 1960. Chap. IV.
291 *brahmaiva idaṁ sarvam iti ābhijānatar viduṣaḥ karmābhāvaḥ*: Gītābhāṣya, ad. 4.24,

another way-although related to the *Gītā*. It occurs in Viśiṣṭādvaita, especially in the Teṅkalai school. In the whole of Viśiṣṭādvaita *bhakti-yoga* counts more than *jñāna-yoga*. *Mukti* is defined as the conquest of *karma* by *kṛpā*, 'redemptive love'.[292] *Īśvara* rules the world by His relentless law of *karma*', says Srinivasachari,[293] 'and His holy wrath against the evil-doer is inescapable, but the rigour of *karma* is overpowered by the redemptive love of *kṛpā*. Evil is destroyed and the evil-doer saved'.

In the two schools of the later Viśiṣṭādvaita, the Northern school (Vaḍakalai) recognizes a certain usefulness of works, whereas the Southern school (Teṅkalai) only believes in grace, *prapatti* and the utter inefficacy of works, emphasising the unconditional nature of God's grace (*nirhetuka kaṭākṣa*)[294] and the emptiness of all other means (*upāya-śūnyatā*).[295]

These doctrines parallel the attitude of Protestantism in Christianity, where salvation can be gained *sola fide*, 'through faith alone'. This parallelism has been studied by R. Otto.[296]

So *karma* is replaced by *jñāna* i.e., the sacrifice, with its unity of the spiritual and the material, has been overcome by a purely spiritual entity (indicating therefore the presence also of a purely material entity). Thus a new concept of being is evolved. It remains for us to understand this *jñāna* which is as *mokṣa* and Brahman at the same time the new concept of being.

9. *Concepts of meditation and knowledge*

In the previous section several points of view regarding the relations between *karma*, meditation and *jñāna* have been reviewed. Now several definitions will be considered in order to analyse further what is meant by the terms for meditation (*dhyāna, nididhyāsana*; ef. *manana*, 'reflection') and knowledge (*jñāna, vijñāna ; vidyā*; cf. bodha, 'thought' cit, 'intelligence').

292 Srinivasachari, o.c. 402.
293 id. 166; cf. 174.
294 id. 530; cf. 536.
295 Dasgupta III 87.
296 R. Otto, *Indiens Gnadenreligion und das Christentum*, Gotha 1930.

Already in the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* a characterization of *dhyāna* occurs, which shows how the sacred syllable *Om* becomes efficacious only through *dhyāna* and how on that account an all together novel effect is produced. Making use of the analogy of kindling fire by means of rubbing[297] two pieces of wood (*araṇi*) together, the text says:[298]

> Making his body the lower *araṇi* and the sacred syllable
> *Om* the upper *araṇi*-
>
> He can by that practice of rubbing which is meditation
> (*dhyāna*) see God as the hidden (fire becomes visible).

It seems to be a mystery how from dry, dark, cold wood fire can suddenly spring; likewise it seems to be a mystery how the unmanifest divine can suddenly become manifest. That this phenomenon can be produced as the effect of a cause is clear from the text. The mysterious or magical efficacy has as its divine prototype the creator, who things silently in his mind and who subsequently materializes the content of his thought.[299] The act of meditation is one of the remnants of the period when material and spiritual were not conceived as different and separate realms. Since the two are discriminated by the increasingly differentiating consciousness, their interconnection has also become mysterious or magical. Moreover, it becomes intelligible that Śaṅkara sees the same magical and unintelligible *adhyāsa*[300] at work in the act of meditation and in Īśvara's creation.

More and better, though perhaps less suggestive, characterizations of what meditation really consists of can be collected from Śaṅkara's works. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya* meditation is spoken of as a mental act of concentration, approaching the form of an object, dependent on scriptural injunctions and resulting in complete identification: '*Upāsanā* is mentally approaching (*upa*) the form of a deity or something else as delineated in scriptural passages relating to meditation, and concentrating the mind

297 Cf. the lamp of Aladin in the Arabian 1001 Nights and the psychoanalytical interpretation (Diets), which reveals one aspect of the mysterious result in its psychological value.
298 *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* 1. 14.
299 Cf. above II 6: 72, n. 168.
300 Cf. below II. 11.

on it (*āsanā*), uninterrupted by secular thoughts, till one is as completely identified with it as with one's own body, conventionally regarded as one's self'.[301] Meditation cannot go beyond the world of names and forms (*nāmarūpa*), though it may help to reach the highest reach thereof. Therefore we read somewhere else in the same commentary: 'Through meditation (*vidyayā*) the world of the Gods (*devaloka*) is to be won....therefore they praise meditation'.[302]

Concentration is especially stressed in a passage of the *Gītābhāṣya*:[303] '*Upāsana* consists in approaching the object of worship by way of meditating on it according to the teaching (*yathāśāstram*) and dwelling for a long time steadily in the current of same thought, (continuous) like a thread of descending oil'. When the meaning of concentration is further analysed, it is seen that it is rather difficult to express what it positively contains since its content manifests itself only ultimately. Therefore the negative is stressed in the *Gītābhāṣya*,[304] as follows: '*Dhyāna* consists in withdrawing by concentration (*upasaṁhrtya*) hearing and other senses into the *manas* (mind) away trom sound, etc, and other sense objects, then withdrawing *manas* into the inner intelligence and then contemplating (the inner intelligence)'. This leads further to the definition of the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*:[305] 'What is called contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) is that mental operation, which, in the case of mind (*citta*) attracted to (external) objects by beginning-less evil associations, is helpful to turn it away from (external) objects and secure firmness (for it) in respect of the Self (alone) as object'. In the definition of the *Vedāntasāra* both aspects are mentioned:[306] '*Nididhyāsana* is the procession of like thoughts referring to the secondless Brahman, dissociated from other objects like the body and so forth'. The positive characterization occurs already in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* too:[307] 'By upāsana we under-

301 Ad. 1.3.9, transl. Swami Madhavananda; cf. M. Hiriyanna's translation of the first three *brāhmaṇas* of the first chapter of the *Bṛhadārāṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya*, Srirangam 1919, 92.
302 Ad. 1.5.16. Here *vidyā* denotes 'meditation'.
303 Ad. 12. 3-4.
304 Ad. 13-24.
305 IX. (*Prayojanam*) 24.
306 192; transl. Hiriyanna 59.
307 Ad. 4.1.7.

stand the lengthened carrying on of an identical train of thought.'[308]

The positive characterisation corresponds to the central Advaitic idea expressed as 'the world is (in as far as it really is) identical with Brahman'. The negative characterisation corresponds to the same idea expressed as 'the world is (in as far as it is different from Brahman) unreal.' Both ideas may have the same significance; but the second is more especially Saṅkara's approach[309] and is reflected in the definition of meditation rather as a withdrawal from the world than as a concentration upon the Absolute. Both, however, cannot be separated.

In one passage of the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* meditation and knowledge are very clearly differentiated; it may serve as a transition to the consideration of knowledge. There it is said,[310] that meditation (*dhyāna*) and reflection (*cintana*) are mental (*mānasa*); they may be performed or not performed or modified (*kartumakartum anyathā vā kartum śakyam*) by a human being (*puruṣena*), because of their dependence on man (*puruṣatantratvāt*). But knowledge (*jñāna*) is the result of the means of right knowledge (*pramāṇjanyam*) and the *pramāṇas* refer to the things as they exist (*pramāṇam yathābhūtavastuviṣayam*). Therefore one cannot say that knowledge may be performed or not performed or modified (*kartumakartumanyathā vā kartum aśakyam*): it only depends on the thing (*kevalam vastutantram eva*), not on Vedic injunction (*na codanātantram*) and also not on man (*na api puruṣatantram*). Meditation is performed (or not performed), i.e. it is an act of the human being, taking its starting point from *śruti*. Knowledge is independent from man and from *śruti*; it is not an act,[311] but it represents the things as they are. This quite phenomenological definition of knowledge does away with the subjective element of meditation as well as with the magical element.

308 *samānapratyayapravāhakaraṇam*.
309 The first approach will find an exponent in Śrī Aurobindo, who substitutes *līlāvāda* for *māyāvāda*.
310 Ad 1.1.4; Nirṇaya Sāgar ed. 83.
311 A mistake, easily made in the Thomistic tradition (where the act plays such an important part) and also in the French language, occurs throughout the work of Lacombe who speaks of 'l'acte de connaissance' (e.g., p. 184).

Through *jñāna* Śaṅkara goes beyond the magical atmosphere of previous thought and arrives at an approach to reality which might be called *gnoseological* in as far as it places knowledge in the centre, but goes beyond the pure intellect.

According to Śaṅkara the objectivity of *jñāna* is a fact, while the objectivity of meditation is not. He explicitly denies the reality of certain identifications to which meditation may lead; they have to be understood figuratively. In the commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*, for instance, reference is made to *mantras* and *arthavādas* which have to be explained in a secondary sense, when the primary literal sense is rendered impossible by other *pramāṇas*.[312] 'The following *arthavāda* passage, for instance', says Thibaut,[313] 'the sacrificial post is the sun', is to be taken in a metaphorical sense; because perception renders it impossible for us to take it in its literal meaning. This is different from the archaic atmosphere of magical identification in the Brāhmanas.

The view that jñāna is objective 'just like the things as they exist' (*yathābhūtavastu*)-appears as realistic in the epistemological sense. But we have to discriminate between two kinds of knowledge: empirical knowledge of external things and knowledge of the Self. The first is adequate in as far as it reveals the second; in every experience the Absolute is given and can be revealed and discovered.[314] The mechanism of knowledge is analysed in the later Advaita *Vivaraṇa* school in the following manner.[315] It is hardly necessary to say that also this analysis shows that the Advaitic position cannot be adequately understood when compared with critical idealism in epistemology (Deussen; cf. *Vijñānavāda*).

According to Vidyāraṇya[316] in empirical knowledge the mind when pervading an object assumes the form of that object. This constitutes a modification or (as translated by Mahadevan and by Bhattacharya) psychosis (*vṛtti*) of the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*) in which there is a reflection (*ābhāsa*) of the intelligence-self (*cit*). But for the 'known-ness' as well as for the 'unknown-

312 Ad. 2.1.13.
313 Ad hoc: I, 318, n. 1.
314 See Murti, o.c. 315 for the difference with *Vijñānavāda*.
315 See Mahadevan. *Philosophy of Advaita*. 9 sq.
316 *Pañcadaśī* 4.28 ap. Mahadevan, o.c. 11.

ness' of an object Brahman-intelligence is required. The reflection of intelligence (*cidābhāsa*) is an appearance of which Brahman is the sole reality. Whereas *ābhāsa* reveals the object alone, Brahman-intelligence illuminates *vṛtti, ābhāsa* and the object as well. Such knowledge arises through the psychosis of the internal organ and is called *vṛttijñāna*.

In the case of Self-knowledge there is no external object, there is nothing outside, there can be no *ābhāsa*, no object and no subject. Concerning this *jñāna* expressed in the *mahāvākya 'aham brahmāsmi'*[317] the *Vedāntasāra* says:[318] 'Spirit (*caitanya*) as reflected in that state of mind, being unable to illumine the self-luminous Brahman, not distinct from the internal self, will be overcome as a lamp flame for example is, by the sun's rays, being unable to overcome them. And it will lapse into Brahman itself, not distinct from the inmost self, as its condition (*upādhi*), viz., the mental state, is no longer there .... Its being affected by the *vṛtti* is necessary in order that ignorance may be dispelled.[319] The reflection serves no purpose here, Brahman being self-luminious'.[320] This knowledge is called *svarūpajñāna* and is possible because of a characteristic of knowledge which is very much stressed in Advaita: self-luminosity (*svaprakāśatva*). In this knowledge none of the characteristics of *vṛtti-jñāna* remain. But it remains affected by *vṛtti* for the purpose of dispelling the ignorance regarding it. In other words there is *vṛtti-vyāpti* (pervasion by psychosis), and not *phala-vyāpti* (pervasion by fruit, i.e., reflection).

Self-luminosity explains not only *svarūpajñāna* but also empirical knowledge, for light is the condition of any possible reflection. In a suggestive comparison the self-luminosity of knowledge (*jñānasvaprakāśatva*), rooted in the self-luminosity of the Absolute which is identical with it, is compared to the lamp used on the stage when dance or drama is performed (*nāṭakadīpa*).[321] The lamp illuminates the actors for the audience and the audience itself; but it shines even if the theatre be emptied of all persons.

317 *BAU* 1.4.10.
318 173, 175, 176; transl. Hiriyanna 58.
319 *Pañcadaśi* 6, 90.
320 *Pañcadaśī* 6.92; *svayamprakāśamāṅatvānnābhāsa upayujyate.*
321 Mahadevan, o.c. 175.

Similarly objects as well as subjects are revealed by Brahman which manifests itself as self-luminous in the knowledge in which subjects and objects have altogether disappeared. In the unity which still is the mark of India's traditional culture, not only do philosophers take their illustrations from the stage and from *nāṭyaśāstra*, but dancers or actors also realise the symbolism of their performance. At present the stage lamp (*valiya vilakku* or *kali vilakku* in Malayāḷam) is considered essential and central on the stage of Kathakaḷi-the dance-drama of Kerala, the homeland of Śaṅkara.[322] Its symbolic significance is felt and explained.[323]

Apart from being self-luminous (about which more below) knowledge is one and is said to rest upon one-ness, unity, as opposed to the multiplicity of works.[324] Knowledge, not being an effect or cause, springs from itself and is *svābhāvika*. Its immediacy and the fact that it is not knowledge of an object distinct from itself (in the case of *svarūpajñāna*) causes its fruit to be also immediately present and not manifest only at a later time, as the fruits of action.[325] Knowledge is therefore *dṛṣṭa*, goes beyond the magical realm and does not need an unseen, *adṛṣṭa*, entity like the Mīmāṁsā *apūrva*. Accordingly there can be no successive stages in knowledge either.[326] The *jīvan-mukti* is a fact of experience, direct and immediate. Śaṅkara's insight into the absolute character of *jñāna* differentiates hirn from mystical philosophers who speak about numerous levels and stages of illumination, mystical insight and realization.

The concept of self-luminosity is analysed at length by Citsukha in the *Tattvapradīpikā*[327] by means of a discussion of its several definitions. It may be referred to here as an example of the 'logistic' of later Advaita. When a thing is considered self-luminous if and only if illumination constitutes its very being and

322 Śaṅkara was probably born in Kaladi, near Alwaye on the banks of the river Pūrna (Periyar) in Kerala.
323 Cf. K.B. Bharata Iver. *Kathakali-the sacred dance-drama of Malabar*, London 1955, 23-25 and plate XIX.
324 Cf also *BAU-bhāṣya* ad. 2.4.14.
325 Cf. *BSB* ad. 3.4.15.
326 See *BSB* ad. 4.1.2.
327 See Bhattacharyya, *Studies in Post-Śaṅkara dialectics*. 48 sq. The discussion is simplified here.

nature, then we have not yet expressed that the illumination is caused by itself and not by something else, as for example the *paraprakāśatva* ('alter-illumination') of the Naiyāyikas. Thus, *svaprakāśatva* must be considered as caused by itself. But this knowledge must also be manifest, as no sane knower argues that he has, knowledge which is not manifest to him. Therefore it is to be *jñānasattāka*, always known and never unknown. As the same holds however for pleasure, pain and other similar feelings, the definition is too wide. It is therefore proposed to define self-luminosity as something which can never be the object of knowledge (*avedya*), as pleasure, pain, etc. are. But, the Naiyāyikas object and question, how it can be the subject of any discussion in that case? Again a refinement is brought into the definition, which ultimately characterizes the self-illuminating character of knowledge as follows: 'Self-luminosity is that, which, while being not an object of knowledge, is fit to be called immediate.'[328] 'Even this elaboration of the concept might be made the target of criticism' says Bhattacharyya.[329] However we shall not follow these investigations, which exemplify the style of later Advaitic works such as the *Tattvapradīpikā*, any further.

It is sometimes held that, since knowledge is self-luminous, jīva is self-luminous too, as it is constituted by knowledge.[330]

The importance of *jñāna* lies in the fact that Brahman or *mokṣa* is the fruit of the knowledge of Brahman. Knowledge is the means to *mokṣa* (*mokṣasādhana*),[331] which is the realization of Brahman. For this view there is considerable scriptural support,[332] especially the passage of the *Muṇḍaka*: 'he who knows that

328 This is the translation of Dr. Mahadevan, which is clearer than Bhattacharyya's 'though incapable of being an object of knowledge, yet possessing competence for perceptual use'.

329 Bhattacharyya, o.c. 52.

330 See *Vadāntaparibhāṣā* VIII (*viṣayāh*) 84.

331 e.g. *Aitareyopaniṣadbhāṣya*, transl. Venkataramiah 3.

332 Cf. the quotations given by Śaṅkara in the *bhāṣya* and 3.4.1. 'He who knows the Self overcomes grief' (*CU* 3.4.1); 'he who knows Brahman attains the highest' (*Tait, Up.* 2.1); 'he who has searched out and understands the self which is free from sin etc. etc, obtains all worlds and all desires' (*CU.* 8.7.1: the latter might refer to *svarga* rather than to *mokṣa*)-commenting the *sūtra* 'the purpose of man (is effected) thence (i.e, through the mere knowledge of Brahman) thus Bādarāyaṇa opines' (*puruṣārtho 'tah śabdāditi Bādarāyaṇaḥ*).

highest Brahman becomes verily Brahman'.[333] *Jñānān mokṣa* 'from knowledge liberation'[334] is the principal doctrine of Śaṅkara concerning *mokṣa* and concerning *jñāna*. It occurs for instance as the conclusion of the last chapter of the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* entitled *prayojanam*, 'the fruit'.[335] 'Thus, therefore, release results from Brahman-knowledge (*tadevam brahmajñānān mokṣa*) .... hence is established the fruit (*iti siddham prayojanam*)'.

Brahman is also directly conceived as pure knowledge. It consists of nothing but knowledge, 'a solid mass of knowledge only' (*vijñānaghana eva*), says the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*.[336] Therefore the term *vijñānātman*, 'the Self of knowledge', occurs.[337] Śaṅkara comments upon the passage as follows 'the word *ghana* (a solid mass) excludes everything belonging to a different species .... the particle *eva*, 'only', is intensive. The idea is that there is no foreign element in it'. We recognise here the idea of the actual infinite. The same passage is quoted in a text of the great commentary, where existence and thought are equated in Brahman;[338] existence is thought and thought is existence (*sattaiva bodho bodha eva ca sattā*). Śaṅkara elaborates this at length, showing that Brahman is existence but not excluding thought, and thought but not excluding existence. Since it cannot have both as distinct attributes it is both, and both are identical with each other.

The ultimate reason for saying that knowledge is the only means to realise Brahman, which is neither a cause nor an effect, is that Brahman itself is knowledge or consciousness. This is manifest in the most famous *svarūpalakṣaṇa*, 'essential, intrinsic definition' occurring in the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*: Brahman is *satyaṁ jñānam anantam* '(true) reality-knowledge-infinity'.[339] Later Brahman was mostly spoken of as *Saccidānanda*, 'being-consciousness-bliss'.

333 *sa yo ha vai tatparamaṃ brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati: Muṇḍakopaniṣad* 3.2.9.
334 Deussen refers (*The system of the Vedānta* 269) in this connection to Kapila's(?) *Sāṁkhyasūtra* 3.28; *jñānam muktiḥ*.
335 IX. 56.
336 2.4.12.
337 e.g. *BSB*. 1.3.25.
338 Ad. 3.2.21, partly quoted and analysed in Lacombe, o.c. 119-129 notes.
339 *Tait. Up.* 2.1.

In his commentary upon *jñānam*, the second element of the definition, Śaṅkara clearly states what should be understood here:[340] ‘The term *jñānam* means apprehension (*jñāpti*), consciousness (*avabodha*). It denotes the ontological perfection (*bhāvasādhana*) (of knowing) and not the fact of being a performer of acts of knowledge (*na tu jñānakartṛ*). It denotes Brakman, in fact, in accordance with the terms *satyam*, and *anantam*, and true reality and infinity are incompatible with the fact of being a performer of acts of knowledge. For, being dependent upon the change of the fact of being a performer of acts of knowledge, how could Brahman be true reality and infinity? What is infinite, indeed, cannot be separated from anything else, and if Brahman is a knower it has to be separate from the knowing and from the known and it cannot be infinite.’

10. *Identifications and the central Advaitic identity*

The result of identification is complete identification. This identification was called magical, because the two identified elements are not ordinarily identical. When Śaṅkara comments upon that text of the *Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* where *sampad*, ‘meditation based on resemblance’ is spoken of[341] he explains this as follows: ‘By this is meant a meditation, by virtue of some point of resemblance (*sāmānya*), on rites with inferior results like the *agnihotra*, as rites with superior results, in order to obtain these results’.[342]

While meditation is being spoken of in connection with *saguṇabrahman, nirguṇabrahman*, is exclusively connected with cognition (knowledge);[343] therefore there may be different meditations on *saguṇabrahman*, whereas there is only one knowledge (which is identical with) *nirguṇabrahman*. Assuming that in meditation on *saguṇabrahman* identity is reached, we shall only consider the real *nirguṇabrahman* in the following investigation. In a *sūtra* of the fourth *adhyāya*[344] the pivotal question is taken up;

340 Transl. de Smet. o.c. 47 sq., where the commentary is analysed in as far as it is an application of what the author calls the Indian ‘polyvalence sémantique des mots’ in the theory of definition. For the translation of *jñapti* as ‘acte de de connaître’ see above 101, n. 311.

341 3.1.6-10.

342 Ad. 3.1.6. transl. Swami Madhavananda 421; cf. also ad. 1.4.10

343 See above II, 7: 82 sq.

344 4.1.3.

in how far in the knowledge[345] of the highest Brahman the latter is known as identical with something else, known before, so that this cognition would in fact be a recognition.[346] As the ego is the starting point of each meditation and the basis of any knowledge, it is asked whether the highest Brahman is to be understood as the I or as different from it. The *siddhānta* view, basing itself exclusively upon scriptural authority, is that the Absolute must be understood as the self. For this several texts are quoted of which the most important are: 'I am Brahman'[347] and: 'That thou art'.[348] With regard to these scriptural passages an important assertion of the *pūrvapakṣin* has to be refùted first. Is it not possible that these passages merely teach the seeing (*darśana*) of Brahman in certain symbols (*pratīka*), analogous to the seeing of Viṣṇu in an image? This is rejected for two reasons: (1) it would violate the principle that texts should, if possible, be understood in their primary sense (*mukhyārtha*) and not in their secondary sense (*lakṣyārtha*): '*mukhyatvāt*' as Śaṅkara himself enunciates it ad. 4.3.12. This is known in Pūrvamīmāṁsā under the name *barhirnyāya*, 'the maxim of the Kuśa-grass'.[349] (2) It would contradict the syntactical form generally used in the scripture for teaching contemplation by means of a symbol, e.g., 'Brahman is mind'[350] or 'Brahman is Āditya'.[351] Moreover the contrary interpretation is explicitly rejected in other important texts such as: 'Now if a man worships another deity, thinking the deity is one and he another, he does not know'[352] and: 'whosoever looks for anything elsewhere than in the Self is abandoned by everything'.[353]

345 Not meditation, as Thibaut says in his conspectus (I lxxvi). I have never found that Śaṅkara uses the term meditation in immediate connection with the highest Brahman; but the term *dṛṣṭi* 'vision' occurs, e.g. in 4.1.5.

346 In how far in Advaita all cognition is in reality recognition is a point (resulting directly from the unreal character of *avidyā*) developed further by Coomaraswamy in his *Recollection: Indian and Platonic*, Suppl. Journal of the American Oriental Society 3 (April-June 1944) 1-18. In this paper *smṛti* is unconvincingly equated with the Platonic *anāmnēsis*.

347 *BAU*. 1.4.10.

348 *CU*. 6.8.7.

349 Jha, *Pūrva-Mīmāṁsā*, 379, n. 34; cf. Mahadevan, *Philosophy of Advaita*, 45 sq.

350 *CU*. 3.18.1.

351 *CU*.3.19.1.

352 *BAU*. 1.4.10.

353 *BAU*. 2.4.6; also quoted: *BAU* 4.4.19.

Śaṅkara discusses again in his commentary upon the next *sūtras* the exceptional cases where Brahman is viewed as a symbol. He sharply differentiates these '*pratikopāsanās*' from the knowledge that Brahman must be understood as the Self. In the commentary upon sūtra, 4.1.3 the significance of the statement is brought out by answering the main objections which can be made against it. These developments are important and have to be followed in greater detail.

Firstly, it is clear that almost exclusively *śabdapramāṇa* is used in establishing the central doctrine of identity of the self and the Absolute. Scripture, especially the Brāhmaṇas, goes in its identifications even beyond the establishment of connections and relations. That amongst all these, identification of the Self with the Absolute occurs is not surprising. But with Śaṅkara the identity is neither magical, nor can its foundation in *śruti* be termed dogmatic.

(1) It is not magical because we are here concerned with an *identity* and not with an *identification*. 'Identification' means 'making identical', e.g., through an act of meditation; according to Śaṅkara, this is a subjective process, e.g. (an example of Zimmer) the gradual identification of the ego with a cow to which no objective reality need correspond.[354] 'Identity', on the other hand, means 'being identical' in reality. This is according to Śaṅkara,[355] objective and does not depend on any activity on our part. As it is real or true, the question is only whether we 'see' it or 'know' it. Therefore Śaṅkara speaks in connection with the identity of the Self and of Brahman, of *dṛṣṭa* 'vision', and *vidyā*, 'knowledge, cognition',[356] which are not activities. The difference between identity and identification

354 Cf. for instance, the identification of certain points with other points in topology, a branch of modern mathematics, which can be arbitrarily done (at least in principle), and where it is not required that these 'magical' identifications correspond to identities, i.e. 'exist' (a dubious concept in mathematics). They can be developed into a formal system of connections.

355 Cf. previous section: *yathābhūtavastu*, 'just like the things as they exist', i.e., objectively.

356 We should consequently translate the *acts dhyāna* and *upāsanā* as respectively 'meditation' and 'contemplation', and *dṛṣṭa* as 'vision' (not as contemplation, as Thibaut does ad 4.1.5: *brahmadṛṣṭi*....).

reveals a new aspect of the struggle against magical and subjective applications of the idea of *karma*.[357]

(2) Śaṅkara's use of the *śabdapramāṇa* is not dogmatic. This is sometimes misunderstood because we are here in a kind of vicious circle. Those who are seeking for justification by means of *pramāṇas* do not possess the vision of the Absolute, which conceals all duality. They deny the truth of the central Advaitic identity because they are enveloped by ignorance concerning it. If they would possess the highest knowledge (*paravidyā*), *śabdapramāṇa* -and all other *pramāṇas*-would altogether vanish for them. The position of Advaita regarding this point is clear. Advaita is not *based* upon scripture: all relations and contradictions disappear in *mokṣa* which is the goal of the system. Advaita is therefore consistent, which need not lead to any conviction regarding its truth.[358] Plotinus said: 'Thus we arrived at a proof; but are we convinced? A proof entails necessity, but not conviction. Necessity resides in the intelligence, and conviction in the soul.'[359] Theorems in logic are only acceptable for those who accept certain axioms and rules of inference.

In the same *adhikaraṇa* Śaṅkara refers to this problem and accepts unhesitatingly, paradoxically enough on scriptural authority, that *śabdapramāṇa* and *śruti* and *smṛti* themselves are unreal, as soon as the Brahman-knowledge arises: "Nor do we mind your objection....that scripture itself ceases to be valid (becomes unreal: *abhāva*); for this conclusion is just what we assume. For on the ground of the text 'Then a father is not a father'[360] upto 'Then the Vedas are not Vedas'[361] we ourselves assume that when knowledge springs up scripture ceases to be valid. And should you ask who then is characterised by the absence of true knowledge, we reply: You yourself who ask this question! And if you

357 It may be mentioned here that there is still a tradition in India that one of the important achievements of Śaṅkara was to control and limit magical practices which were widespread at the time, partly due to exaggerations and abuses of Tantric practices. Tantric elements have, on the other hand, been traced in Śaṅkara's works. Cf. Lacombe, o.c. 379 (IV).

358 Cf. above II, 7.

359 *Enneads* V 3.6.8-10 (Bréhier).

360 *BU*, 4.3.22.

361 *Ibid.*

retort: ‘But I am the Lord as declared by scripture’, we reply: ‘very well, if you have arrived at that knowledge, then there is nobody who does not possess such knowledge’. The position of the last sentences can be summed up by saying: he who disagrees is ignorant; if he knew he would agree. This excludes the possibility of somebody who knows and nevertheless disagrees. This is evidently appropriate in the case of *brahmavidyā*; whoever knows that the self is Brahman will certainly have no objection against the doctrine which propounds this thesis. But one might perfectly well understand the meaning and significance of the statement ‘the self is identical with the Absolute’, without having confidence in its truth and without agreeing with it.[362]

The topic of the unreality of *śabdapramāṇa* has repeatedly occupied the later Advaitins. Appaya Dikṣita for instance asks[363] whether the *śabdapramāṇa*, which is the evidence for Brahman is real or unreal. ‘If it be real, then, as there is a reality which is other than Brahman, the latter's non-duality will be destroyed. If it be unreal, then, what is revealed by an unreal evidence should also be unreal’. But the latter conclusion is invalid, as what is unreal can nevertheless be practically efficient, just as the roaring of a dream-lion in a dream can sublate the dream-experience itself and awaken the dreamer.[364]

The commentary upon the same *sūtra*, 4.1.3. also refutes other objections. One objection is that Advaita is not in accordance with experience. It seems to contradict all our experiences radically; we know the Self as ourselves, i.e., our egos, invested with a number of qualities which cannot belong to the Absolute which is *nirguṇa*, without qualities[365]; e.g., all evil qualities and qualities of ignorance. But this opposition of qualities has to be declared false, says Śaṅkara: ‘Nor is there any force in the objection that things with contrary qualities cannot be identical; for this opposition of qualities can be shown to be false.’ Not false in the sense that the evil qualities have to be ascribed to the

362 It is unfortunately an all-too-easy opinion among some Advaitins that whoever disagrees with Advaita, evidently does not understand it. This is defining disagreement a *priori* as ignorance.

363 *Siddhāntaleśasaṁgraha* ap. Mahadevan, *Philosophy of Advaita*, 57 sq.

364 Mahadevan o.c. 59.

365 Śaṅkara treats it in this context rather as *saguṇa*.

Absolute so that the Lord would not be a Lord; but in non-ascribing these same qualities to the other side of the duality, i.e., the Self, which is not the same as our transmigrating soul: 'Nor is it true that from our doctrine it would follow that the Lord is not a Lord. For in these matters scripture alone is authoritative, and we, moreover do not at all admit that scripture teaches the Lord to be the Self of the transmigrating soul, but maintain that by denying the transmigrating character of the soul it aims at teaching that the soul is the Self of the Lord. From this it follows that the non-dual Lord is free from all evil qualities, and that to ascribe to him contrary qualities is an error.'

Thus we arrive at the real Self 'by denying the transmigrating character of the soul' (*ātma*) *saṁsāritvāpohena*.[366] This being posited as the truth it becomes a matter of realisation to see this non-transmigrating Self as the deeper ground of our transmigrating selves. This knowledge cannot arise for the transmigrating soul for it has to be gained by ceasing to transmigrate, i.e., by attaining *mokṣa*. To conceive of the deepest Self as the transmigrating soul constitutes the principal ignorance (*avidyā*) which obstructs insight and real knowledge (*vidyā*). All positions differing from the ultimate truth are affected by *avidyā*. *Avidyā* is the main stumbling-block obstructing the *brahmavidyā*. It poses the main metaphysical problem of Advaita. Although it is a unique concept in Śaṅkara, its central position in the system and its psychological appeal could only be explained by a series of older ideas, such as the dangerous actions performed in erroneous sacrifices, which have to be expiated by *prayaścitta*, and also the magical inefficiency of *avidyā* as it occurs in the *Chāndogyopaniṣad*.

The Sanskrit term Ātman does not fully correspond to the English term Self, as the latter can only be used in connection with persons whereas the former has a much wider application. Commenting upon the *sūtra* 4.1.4, Śaṅkara speaks for instance of gold as being the *ātman* of golden ornaments: 'for golden ornaments and figures made of gold are not identical with each other but only in as far as gold constitutes the *ātman* of both'. Lacombe[367]

366 Note here the occurrence of the term *apoha*, which is of central importance in *Vijñānavāda* and in several speculations about language.

367 o.c. 52.

quotes a passage, where quality (*guṇa*) has its *ātman* in substance (*dravyātma*).[368] Here *ātman* could be translated as 'essence'.[369] Compare also the usages of *ātman* in BAU 1. 2.1 and 1. 2. 4, where it might be similarly translated by 'essence'. According to Lacombe, *ātman* designates 'the metaphysical moment where being interiorizes and becomes perfect, complete, final, reaching the Absolute by this very interiorization'.[370] But in Advaita 'interiorizing', 'becoming', 'reaching' cannot be understood as changes or transformations and seem rather to denote a situation. Though we need not deviate from the established usage of translating *ātman* by 'Self', we have to realize that the term has a greater extension. Were we to adopt the term essence the central Advaitic doctrine could be formulated in a way which sounds more familiar in Western philosophical terminology: 'the Absolute, i.e., the essence of the All, is identical with the essence of myself'. What prevents us from seeing this is *avidyā*, the incapacity to see the essence underlying the manifestations.

It may be remarked here, that in this formulation the similarity with some later phases of Muslim thought, becomes exceedingly great. The doctrine of Ibn 'Arabī can be summarized as: 'the essence of the creator is identical with the essence of the creatures'. Kindred formulations occur also in Angelus Silesius.

11. *Adhyāsa - avidyā - māyā*

What is *avidyā*? In the beginning of the great commentary this concept is introduced and defined as *adhyāsa, adhyāropa*, 'superimposition'.[371] This idea is often discussed and defined by the important Advaitic thinkers. We will analyse its significance by considering a passage in the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* where the term is used in an ordinary sense, not referring to the metaphysical *adhyāsa* which is identical with *avidyā*. This passage establishes a

368 Ad. 2.2.17; not as Lacombe has it: the *guṇa* is the *ātman* of the *dravya* (*tasmāddravyātmakatā guṇasya*).

369 Lacombe (o.c. 51; cf. 104) mentions on the other hand as the Sanskrit equivalents of 'essence': *svarūpa, svabhāva, bhāva, sāra*.

370 'Le moment métaphysique ou l'être s'intériorise et de quelque façon s'achève, se termine et finalement se hausse à l'absolu par ce mouvement même d'intériorisation'. 'Mouvement' is certainly misleading: the French language is too dynamical.

371 *upodghāta*.

connection with the *sūtra* just analysed[372] and deals with the above mentioned *pratīkopāsanās*.

In the commentary upon the *sūtra* 'Not in the symbol (is the Self to be contemplated); for he (the meditating person) (may) not (view symbols as being the Self).'[373] Śaṅkara argues, that when Brahman is meditated upon in a symbol, *pratīka* (e.g. *Āditya*), the *pratīka* should not be understood as the Self. This follows from previous considerations. When scripture speaks about a meditation on a symbol, this cannot be understood as the Self, which is never the object of meditation. The question arises as to which mental act is enjoined by: '*Āditya is Brahman*' and which relation obtains in such a case between Brahman and its *pratīka, āditya*. The answer is that the act and the relation, which it establishes, are *adhyāsa* 'superimposition'.

The commentary upon the next *sūtra* deals with the question whether the vision (*dṛṣṭi*) of *Āditya* is to be superimposed upon Brahman (*brahmaṇyadhyasitavya*), or the vision of Brahman upon *Āditya*. This doubt arises because scriptural texts present both members in the same case and in apposition (*āditya brahma, prāṇo brahma*). An objection is that these texts inform us perhaps about a causal relation between Brahman and Āditya, etc. Against this it is argued, that it would be entirely purposeless to mention any particular effect of Brahman. However, if the text does not embody knowledge, it must be an injunction to meditate. In that case, as two members are given, their relation must be superimposition.

To the question, which is to be superimposed upon which, the *sūtra* answers: the Brahman-vision upon *Āditya*, 'on account of exaltation' (*utkarṣāt*). 'For thus *Āditya* and so on are viewed in an exalted way (*utkarṣeṇa*), the vision of something higher than they being superimposed upon them.' We might think of some *pratīka* as an actual object and superimpose that object upon Brahman, i.e., view Brahman as this limited object. But it is 'exalting' to take the *pratīka* only as the starting point for a meditation, in which Brahman is superimposed upon it: for the

372 4.1.3.
373 *na pratīke na hi saḥ*: 4.1.4.

pratīka is exalted and Brahman is not degraded. This is even true, Śaṅkara adds, according to a worldly (*laukika*) rule, 'viz., the one enjoining that the idea of something higher is to be superimposed upon something lower, as when we view-and speak of- the king's character as a king. This rule must be observed in worldly matters, because to act contrary to it would be disadvantageous; for should we view a king as a charioteer, we should thereby lower him, and that would be in no way beneficial'.

The usage of the term *adhyāsa* becomes perfectly clear, especially from the example: viewing something lower as if it were something higher or seeing the higher entity in the lower is 'superimposing' the higher on the lower. 'Superimposition' denotes as well the relation from the higher to the lower, as also, from the point of view of the agent, the activity which establishes this relation. We may go one step further and say that *adhyāsa* evidently does not rest upon an identity which is objectively real, but is an identification. It can be realized through the identifying act of meditation and depends on subjective activity. Other examples, equally instructive, are mentioned by Śaṅkara, for instance: the idea of the God Viṣṇu is superimposed upon a statue of Viṣṇu, etc.[374]

In the context of the last example a kind of definition is also given, which is interesting as here again we are concerned with ordinary *adhyāsa* and not with the metaphysical concept which is identical with *avidyā*. Śaṅkara says:[375] '*Adhyāsa* takes place when the idea of one of two things not being dismissed from the mind, the idea of the second thing is superimposed upon the first thing; so that together with the superimposed idea the former idea remains attached. to the thing on which the second idea is superimposed. When e.g., the idea of (the entity) Brahman superimposes itself upon the idea of the name (i.e., *Om*), the latter idea continues in the mind and is not driven out by the former'. This needs almost no clarification, but may be restated utilising the previous terminology and including the concepts 'higher' and 'lower' as follows: *Adhyāsa*, 'superimposition', is a mental act of identification of a higher entity A and lower entity B, in such

374 Ad. 3.3.9; cf. also ad. 4.1.5, towards the end,
375 *Ibid.*

a way that the lower B is looked upon as A or that A is seen through or in B, i.e., while the entity B also continues in the mind (which would otherwise not identify two, but move from the one to the other). It is said, then, that A is 'superimposed' upon B. Thus it is clear that superimposition is a kind of identification which can be realized by a meditation and which has a subjective and unintelligible-magical character. This meaning arises even before we turn to metaphysics.

Now let us turn to definitions of the metaphysical *adhyāsa*, which is *avidyā*. The significance of this concept is stressed by the fact that the great commentary's introduction (*upodghāta*) opens with its definition and discussion. In this introduction Śaṅkara is not bound by any text and can freely explain the meaning of perhaps the most original of his ideas-partly coined, it is true, in order to maintain the unity of the scriptural texts, but itself not easily justifiable with the help of scriptural support. The *upodghāta* of the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* gives the best picture of the thought of Śaṅkara, as it constitutes the 'free' introduction to the work which is (apart from the Upadeśasāhasrī, which is genuine as it is quoted by Sureśvara) least bound by the text it comments upon (because of the unintelligibility of the *Brahmasūtras* themselves). It is therefore always and rightly taken as the basis for the study of his system.[376]

In the *upodghāta* Śaṅkara defines *adhyāsa* as follows: 'the apparent presentation (*avabhāsa*) (to consciousness) of something previously observed (*pūrvadṛṣṭa*) in some other thing (*paratra*), in the form of remembrance (*smṛtirūpah*)'.[377] Here *adhyāsa* is again presented as a mental activity, through which the higher is not seen in the lower (as in the above definition), but the previously observed in the actually observed. Thus we have previously observed silver while observing mother-of-pearl at present. But only if we see mother-of-pearl as silver or see silver in mother-

376 A detailed and perhaps stylometric study of the language of the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, has to be the standard for judging the authenticity of other works (a task begun by P. Hacker)-as Plato's *Laws*, commonly regarded as his last work, was taken as a starting point for establishing the relative chronology of his dialogues.

377 *Smṛtirūpaḥ paratra pūrvadṛṣṭāvabhāsaḥ*.

of-pearl, we superimpose silver upon mother-of-pearl. This identification is only called superimposition, in the newly defined sense, if it is erroneous and subjective: for instance, if we perceive at present a silver ornament and see in it the silver which we perceived before, this is not called superimposition. As here silver is also perceived at present, this is actual perception and not of the nature of remembrance, as the definition requires (*smṛtirūpah*). In this way the additional clause is explained in the *Bhāmatī*.[378] The addition is very important, as it stresses the fact that *adhyāsa* is subjective and 'magically-creative' in the sense in which identifying meditation is. Comparing this definition with the above mentioned definition of 'meditation-*adhyāsa*', it can be said that it analyses further in one respect whereas it differs in another respect. (1) It analyses more deeply because it observes that, from the point of view of the agent, an entity A cannot be superimposed upon an actually perceived entity B, if A were not previously observed. This stresses the temporal character of *adhyāsa*, which is an activity (and not a situation or a timeless vision or knowledge). It also shows that Śaṅkara does not operate with *a priori* concepts, which are in a certain way also superimposed upon the objects.[379] (2) The definition of the metaphysical *adhyāsa* differs from that of the meditation-*adhyāsa* because the condition, that only the higher should be superimposed upon the lower, has disappeared.

This also follows from the context in which the definition is given. It is preceded by examples, where the lower is superimposed upon the higher, such as the superimposition of the body upon the I (in expressions like 'I am the body', or 'I am this', *ahamidam*) and it leads to the conclusion that it is not absurd to superimpose the non-Self upon the Self.

The *upodghāta* starts with the observation that to superimpose upon the subject (which is the sphere or realm of the notion 'I'), with all its attributes, the object (which is the sphere of the

378 See Thibaut I, 4, n.3.

379 Kant's *a priori* concepts do neither spring from experience, nor do they arise without experience: but as soon as the object is experienced, the *a priori* manifests itself as being superimposed upon it. The discovery of an *a priori* could be considered the removal of a superimposition.

notion 'Thou'), with its attributes-and the reverse likewise has to be considered erroneous. This is continuously done in everyday life. Because of this error *adhyāsa* is the same as *avidyā*. Next the full significance of the metaphysical *adhyāsa* becomes manifest: it is superimposition of the non-Self upon the inner Self (*pratyagātman*). It may be understood more definitely from the following examples: 'Extra-personal attributes are superimposed upon the Self if a man considers himself sound and entire, as long as his wife, children, and so on are sound and entire. Attributes of the body are superimposed upon the Self if a man thinks of himself (his Self) as stout, lean, fair, as standing, walking or jumping. Attributes of the sense-organs, if he thinks 'I am mute, or deaf, or one-eyed, or blind'. Attributes of the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*) if he considers himself (his Self) subject to desire, intention, doubt, determination, and so on. Having superimposed the producer of the notion of the ego (*ahampratyayin*, i.e. the *antaḥkaraṇa*) upon the inner Self .... one superimposes again the inner Self upon the inner organ, etc. Thus is the nature of the original *adhyāsa*, beginningless and endless (*anādirananta*), having the form of an erroneous notion (*mithyāpratyayarūpa*),[380] cause of the fact that the individual souls are agents and enjoyers (*kartṛtva-bhoktṛtva-pravartaka*), observed by everyone (*sarvalokapratyakṣa*)'. All this is presupposed in the level of daily practical activity (*vyavahāra*). But, concludes the introduction, the abolition of this wrong notion which is the cause of all evil is the purport of all Vedānta texts; thus will be established 'the knowledge of the absolute unity of the Self (*ātmaikatva*)'.

There is a parallelism here which provides us with a deeper philosophical explanation of doctrinal differences: just as Śaṅkara has combated, in the name of *jñāna*, the Mīmāṁsakas with their magical *karmavāda* and the *karma*-background of Indian thought in general, he shows how a deeper lying magical activity, superimposition, causes the situation where all who are in the level of *vyavahāra*, will be exempt from *brahmavidyā* in their wrong identification of the non-Self and the Self. The most subtle of all

380 In Śaṅkara, *avidyā* is the same as *mithyājñāna*; amongst other Advaitins it is its cause: P. Hacker, *Eigentümlichkeitein der Lehre und Terminologie Śaṅkaras: Avidyā, Nāmarūpa, Māyā, Īśvara*, Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft 100 (1950) 246-268; 249.

karmas is the superimposing activity, *adhyāsa*,[381] which Śaṅkara combats in the name of *jñāna*. He need not fight this concept in specific groups of human beings, e.g. the Mīmāṁsakas, but finds it everywhere in human nature itself, since superimposition is at the root of human existence. We do not only fail to reach the goal when we engage upon the activities of sacrificing and meditating (these being additional, secondary superimpositions), but we even fail when we do not cancel the deepest activity, i.e., the superimposition of the non-Self which is presupposed in all other forms of action.

The addition *smṛtirūpaḥ* 'in the form of remembrance', underscores the subjective character of *adhyāsa*. But *adhyāsa* necessarily has an objective character too. In order to know how far the latter is related to its subjective character, we may contrast *adhyāsa* which is *smṛtirūpaḥ* with *smṛti* 'remembrance' itself.[382] In remembrance we are conscious of the fact that we are concerned with a mental image of the past. In superimposition we do not possess that consciousness (we are deluded in *avidyā*) and we take the mental image as referring to an extra-mental fact. But what is the status of the mental image, say, the silver of the stock-example? In the situation of superimposing it upon mother-of-pearl, it is neither real, nor unreal. It is not real, because it is sublated; but it is not unreal, because it appears. It is sublated, because it does not really occur in mother-of-pearl; it appears, because it is based upon the past perception of real silver. It is therefore called *anirvacanīya*, 'inexplicable'. If this holds for the mental image, *adhyāsa* and *avidyā* must necessarily be *anirvacanīya* too.[383] They neither belong to the category of being, nor to that of non-being. If *avidyā* would be unreal it would not trouble us and we would not be caught in it; if it would be real the Absolute would not be the only reality and we would lose the non-dualistic position. Therefore, it neither is, nor is not; it

381 Cf. Lacombe o.c. 125: '....dans la synthèse çankarienne *avidyā* marque la place qui revient au *karman* .... l'une et l'autre sont essentiellement dynamiques ....'

382 See A. Bhattacharya Sastry, o.c. 237 sq.

383 Śaṅkara himself in the *sūtrabhāṣya* does not characterise *adhyāsa* or *avidyā* as *anirvacanīya*; but it occurs there as an attribute of *nāmarūpe*; see Hacker, o.c. 255.

is of a different category, about which we cannot speak; it is *anirvacanīya*.

It is clear that there lies a problem here.[384] In fact, any slightest negation of the unreality of *avidyā* attributes being to it and thus destroys non-dualism.[385] In order to safeguard the advaitic character of Advaita, *avidyā* is sometimes called *tucchā*, 'non-being';[386] but this holds only for the possessor of *brahmavidyā*. The Pañcadaśī clarifies the position as follows. According to the ultimate point of view, for the person who has attained realization, *māyā* is *tucchā*, 'non-being'; for the metaphysician or dialectician it is neither real nor unreal (*anirvacanīya*); and for the man in the street it is real (*vāstavī*).[387] One of the main objections of Rāmānuja against Advaita is the 'neither-being-nor-non-being' character of *avidyā*, which violates according to Rāmānuja the law of the excluded third.[388] Also modern critics of Advaita often look upon *anirvacanīya* as the weakest point of the system. But we ought rather to admire Śaṅkara for the firmness of mind, with which he has accepted the conclusion, that multiplicity becomes inexplicable if Brahman is posited as the only reality. He readily admits that there are important points which his system fails to explain, but this is due to a principal inexplicability based upon the structure of reality. In other philosophies we often discover flaws where their explanation fails. In Advaita these failures are part of the system.

No term expresses better the magical and erroneous character of the primary identification than *anirvacanīya*. Śaṅkara, having

384 Cf. the ambiguity of *anirvacarīzyatva*, which can be interpreted as strength or as weakness. Rāmānuja formulated in the *Śrī Bhāṣya* his *sapta-vidha-anupapatti* (seven main objections) against Advaita; but the Advaitins replied: these objections are *bhūṣana* 'ornaments', not *dūṣaṇia*, 'defects'.

385 Cf. D.H.H. Ingalls, *Whose is avidyā?* Philosophy East and West 3 (1953-1954) 69-72, where it is shown how Śaṅkara always denies any connection of *avidyā* with the soul, but nowhere denies the reality of *avidyā* itself.

386 e.g. Prakāśānanda: Dasgupta II 224.

387 *Pañcadaśī* 6.130. See Mahadevan, *Philosophy of Advaita* 216.

388 It is perhaps not superfluous to add for the seekers for parallels that there is no connection between the Advaitic *anirvacanīya* and the third undeclined 'u' value of the intuitionism of L.E.J. Brouwer, which denies the validity of the law of the excluded third (cf. above I 5: 20, n. 32). Śaṅkara, moreover, seems to accept the principle of the excluded. third (see below II 13: 136, n. 446) and uses it (e.g. ad 3.1.1, quoted above II 7 : 81-2). Cf. also Staal, *Negation and the law of contradiction in Indian thought-A comparative study*, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 25 (1962).

criticized the magical character of karmic activity as manifest e.g. in the apūrva of Mīmāṁsā, and safeguarding the intelligibility of *brahnavidyā* and of *brahmajñāna*, has descended from the pure realm of the non-dual Absolute and recognised the inscrutable character of the activity which causes the multiplicity of this world.

The characterization of the metaphysical *adhyāsa* as superimposition of the non-Self upon the Self answers more questions than we have yet asked. Thus it is often asked in later Advaita what the *āśraya*, 'locus', of *avidyā* is. Where does *avidyā* exist?[389] The *jīva* cannot be its locus (although this was the opinion of Vācaspati Miśra and his followers), as it itself a product of *avidyā*. It is clear that the only entity which is independent from *avidyā* is Brahman, and that therefore, if *avidyā*. has a locus at all (which must be the case), it must be Brahman. But this means that superimposition is of the non-Self upon the Self. That *avidyā* has its locus in Brahman also means that it is the function of *avidyā* to cover and to conceal the real nature of Brahman, just as a cloud hides the sun.

The magical activity of the mind which wrongly identifies the object with the Absolute constitutes the superimposition of non-Self upon the Self. Thus interpreted, human existence as we know it is superimposition. This existence arose by superimposition and it continues by superimposition. In Heidegger's terminology, superimposition would be the first 'Existential' of 'Dasein'. The Vedic sacrifice, which corresponds to our notion of being in as far as it makes being accessible and determines being as being, including the human being of the sacrificer, led to the interiorised activity of meditation. Here the newly discovered being wants to reassure itself of its unity and continuity and accept differentiations. Hence it meditates and identifies the discontinuous. In a next step, the discriminations are accepted-but as unreal or inexplicable; the illusory character of identification is underlined; hence the distrust of *upāsanā* and of *adhyāsa*. Lastly we have arrived at the doctrine of a universal erroneous identification, termed *adhyāsa*, which is a closer characterization of human being itself. In its most authentic mode of being, the rest appears again as illusory if the ultimate knowledge of being arises.

389 Sec Bhattacharyya *op. cit.* 288.

The ancient interconnectedness of things expressed in archaic continuity and in the symbolic *pūrṇam* requires that all being as we know it and as it presents itself to us (i.e. being in the sense of *Seiendes, ón*, not as ultimate being, the *sat* of *saccidānanda*) is likewise superimposition. This is the ultimate significance of the expression, that the non-Self is superimposed - and not only that 'we superimpose', which may reveal *our* nature. Thus *adhyāsa, avidyā* or *ajñāna* has an objective or ontic aspect, apart from its being the complement of the gnoseological aspect of reality exhibited in *jñāna* or *vidyā*. For this objective aspect Śaṅkara has used the term *māyā*. Just as *jñāna* in the ultimate analysis is the same as Brahman, *àjñāna* is also the same as *māyā*. If in *jñāna* there is unity of knowledge, knower and known, and therefore non-difference from the object, Brahman - *avidyā* must necessarily also be the same as its objective counterpart, *māyā*.

If *māyā* is the same as *avidya* its nature is not at all fully expressed by the conventional rendering 'illusion'. Here another line of investigation, followed by several authors, joins our investigation and leads to the same conclusion. If we analyse the common denotation of the term *māyā*, we do not find anything like 'illusion', but rather '*magically-creative activity*'. But we have tried to show exactly that the concept of *māyā* in Advaita expresses the erroneous identification which creates this world in a magical sense. Hence the term *māyā* was very appropriate, as can be seen from its meaning before Śaṅkara.[390]

Not 'illusion', but 'creative activity' seems to be the principal meaning of *māyā* in the Vedas: 'the powerful Aśvins, with *māyā* endowed, created (heaven and earth).'[391] The divine craftsman, who fabricates for instance tumblers for the Gods, is rich in *māyā*.[392] Āditya creates the day and night by his *māyā*,[393] etc. A consideration of the term *māyā* also shows that in the Veda 'there is no basis for any conception of the unreality of the world' (Radhakrishnan). In the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* Maheśvara is *mūyin*, 'who operates with or who possesses *māyā*'; his *māyā* is *pra*-

390 The following references are taken from: J. Gonda, *Maya, Tijdschrift voor Philosophie* 14 (1952) 3-62.
391 *Ṛgveda* 10.24.4.
392 id. 53.9.
393 *Atharvaveda* 13.2.3.

kṛti ‘nature’.[394] In the *Bhagavad Gītā* the term manifests its covering, concealing, hiding character: ‘I am not easily perceivable for everybody, being covered by my *yogamāyā*.’[395]

With Gauḍapāda the term comes to possess a more central philosophical significance. The meaning of creative (and perhaps also: deluding) activity remains essential, e.g., ‘all bodies in the phenomenal world are projected in the manner of a dream by the *māyā* of the Ātman’.[396] It is conspicuous how this could develop into Śaṅkara's characterization ‘superimposition of the non-Self upon the Self.’

The subjective aspect (*avidyā*) can be conceived as rooted in the human being and is acceptable from an existential-phenomenological point of view. This does not mean that the objective aspect (*māyā*) is not likewise acceptable. Phenomenology is not subjectivism. But the phenomenological method has to consider *avidyā* first and *māyā* next. That for Śaṅkara both occupy the same level may be true, but it is not phenomenologically given. It is a metaphysical assertion concerning reality, which we can neither deny, nor take as our methodological starting point, unless we are ready to go beyond the phenomenological approach. Analogously, the principle of *anirvacanīyatva* reveals itself first in the human realm, and subsequently in the total realm of *māyā*.

Considering the objective *māyā* aspect of *avidyā*, we have to realize that also this renders an idealistic interpretation of Advaita impossible. As we have seen already from the analysis of the process of perception, Advaita is quite different from any kind of subjective idealism:[397] the subject does not create the objective world. It is true that there is no world outside the Self which is real; but the Self is not at all the same as ‘the subject’. The outside world of *māyā* does neither depend upon my *avidyā*, nor does

394 id. 4.9.10.

395 *BG*. 7.25.

396 3.10.

397 It should never be forgotten that also Kant did not propound any subjective idealism, but critical idealism, which is more ‘criticism’ than 'idealism". As for Śaṅkara, the fact that he rejects the subjective idealism of *Vijñānavāda* (ad 2.2.28-32) speaks for itself. Cf. Murti o.c. 313-316; and D.H.H. Ingalls, *Śaṅkara's arguments against the Buddhists*. Philosophy East and West 3 (1953-1954) 291-306.

the reverse hold: both are aspects of the same mysterious activity of *adhyāsa*. The approach of Deussen and his endeavour to show the virtual identity of the Advaita of Śaṅkara with the doctrines of Kant and Schopenhauer[398] were erroneous and have led to much misunderstanding of Advaita in the West. This misunderstanding rests upon the confusion of the Self with the subject, as can for instance be seen from Deussen's account of *adhyāsa*:[399] '.... the Vedanta declared the empirical concept which represents to us a manifold existing outside the Self, a world of the Object existing independently of the subject, to be glamour (*māyā*), an innate illusion (*bhrama*) resting on an illegitimate transference (*adhyāsa*) in virtue of which we transfer the reality, which alone belongs to the subject, to the world of the object, and, conversely, the characteristics of the objective world, e.g., corporeality, to the subject, the Self, the Soul.' Deussen also spoke erroneously, in connection with *brahmavidyā* about an 'objectless knowing subject',[400] whereas in fact this knowledge transcends both subject and object.

The difference from subjective idealism is also manifest in the characterization of *avidyā* as positive -notwithstanding the clanger of dualism. This positive character explains that *avidyā* can cover or conceal Brahman. This concealment consists in the fact[401] that the *jīva* is ignorant of its own self-luminosity. This is one of the marks of the *jīva*, as we saw before, on account of the *svayamprakāśatva* of *jñāna*. It seems that the positive character of *avidyā* is not yet stressed in the *Sūtrabhāṣya*.[402] In general, the later Advaitins seem to have increasingly substantialized *avidyā*. Nevertheless, in Śaṅkara also the substantial aspect occurs and deserves a closer analysis.

12. *Vivarta, Nāmarūpe*

Several *adhyāsas* have been noticed to which several *āśrayāḥ*, 'loci', correspond: the texts speak of superimposition upon an

398 Or of Plato with Kant and Schopenhauer, as was still more or less the view of Cohen and Natorp. Cf. above I.8: 27-8.
399 System of Vedanta 43.
400 Rightly criticised by Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, 71.
401 Bhattacharyya, o.c. 292.
402 See Hacker, o.c. 254-255.

image, upon a king's charioteer, and generally upon essence (ātman). But 'essence' was for instance the element silver in a silver ornament i.e., what Aristotle called the material cause. In the Indian terminology the formal cause is superimposed upon the material cause and this is a wrong identification because the formal element is ultimately unreal. In the case of the king and the charioteer, it is simply the wrong name or concept, 'king' which is superimposed upon the king's charioteer: no other reality whatsoever. These two examples illustrate the two elements, which are generally superimposed upon essence: i.e., *nāmarūpe*, '(the world of) names and forms.' Śaṅkara called *avidyā* or *adhyāsa, anādi* 'beginningless' and *ananta*, 'endless'. This can be specified by the fact that there are *avyākṛte nāmarūpe*, 'unmanifest names and forms,' and *vyākrte nāmarūpe* 'manifest names and forms.' They denote respectively the material cause of the world[403] and the phenomenal world as it appears.[404] Śaṅkara says that *avidyā* 'makes' the *nāmarūpe*, which 'fixes' them 'upon', 'attaches' them 'to', 'throws' them 'over' the essence (Ātman).[405] All this activity is superimposition, and since this is a temporal activity, whereas the *nāmarūpe* which are *māyā* are beginningless and endless, the *nāmarūpe* are called *avyākṛte* before the superimposition and *vyākṛte* afterwards. He quotes[406] as scriptural support for this 'in the beginning this was that only which is not'[407] and 'non-existent (*asat*) indeed this was in the beginning.'[408] Here not absolute non-existence is meant, but 'only a different quality or state, viz., the state of names and forms being unmanifest, which state is different from the state of names and forms being manifest.' And also: 'the designation of 'non-existence' applied to the effect before its production has reference to a different state of being merely. And as those things which are distinguished by name and form are in ordinary language called 'existent', the term 'non-existent' is figuratively applied to them to denote the state in which they were previously to their differentiation.'

403 '*Nāmarūpe* als Urstoff': Hacker, o.c. 258. The *avyākṛte nāmarūpe* are once called *prakṛt* (ad. 2. 1.1.14).
404 '*Nāmarūpe* als Erscheinungswelt'; 259.
405 Id. 264.
406 Ad. 2.1.17.
407 *CU*. 3.19.1.
408 *Taitt, Up*. 2.7.

What strikes us in this way of thought is the continuity; it is the idea that nothing can come out of nothing, and that for this reason and in this sense only the world is beginningless and endless. This solves at the same time another difficulty. If *adhyāsa* is not a situation but an activity, or at any rate nearer to the second concept than to the first, the question arises as to when this activity took place; whether it was for instance a unique occurrence comparable to creation in the monotheistic religions. Although it is an activity, it has a continuous, everlasting and also omnipresent character. The only thing that 'happens' through it is that the unmanifest becomes manifest. When looked upon from the Absolute, nothing happens at all. This is why *adhyāsa* could be called *anādirananta*. The erroneous identification by which a world of names and forms seems to come into being is a continuous ephemeral phenomenon, superimposing itself upon Brahman but not affecting Brahman.

Thus we find the archaic continuity back in the celebrated Advaitic doctrine that the effect is only an illusory imposition upon the cause, or, popularly speaking, the opinion that nothing comes out of nothing. A specific form of the universal *adhyāsa* is that we superimpose upon what we call 'causes' other entities which we call 'effects.' As the superimposition is erroneous, the effects are unreal and the causes are no causes. Because of this specific form of our *adhyāsa* we create a world of change and causality by supposing that the cause transforms itself into the effect (*pariṇāma*); it seems to us (this is the *satkāryavāda* or *parināmavada* of the Sāṁkhya system[409]) that there is always a material cause which manifests itself in different forms. The truth is that the forms are superimposed, i.e., neither real, nor unreal, but *anirvacanīya*. In connection with this view of causality, a special technical term for *adhyāsa* is introduced in post-Śaṅkara Advaita: *vivarta*. This may be defined as *adhyāsa* of the effect upon the cause. *satkāraṇavada* is therefore also called *vivartavāda*.

These indications may be further specified by a closer examination of some of the texts. The examples with the help of which *satkāraṇavāda* or *vivartavāda* is illustrated are mostly

409 A system which Śaṅkara generally combats (ad. 2.1.1-2; 2.2.1-10); its *pariṇāmavada*, as we will see, implicitly.

taken from the material realm. We are here concerned with an evaluation and not with a phenomenological observation: when it seems that the clay is transformed into a jar, we can either attach a higher value to the material cause (clay) and look upon the form as ephemeral (as Śaṅkara does), or we can evaluate the form more highly and speak of the creation of something new, the jar. This shows that the way in which we conceive of causation is *a priori* and depends on us rather than on the phenomena. Because of this we are entitled to say that the archaic universal desire for continuity continues to live in *satkāraṇavāda*. But in addition to that we have also to note that our rational thinking cannot accept creation out of nothing, which makes a very irrational impression. *Satkāraṇaväda* is therefore more rational. Rationality requires continuity. *Satkäraṇavāda* or *vivartavāda*, therefore, depend on a mental status and on a rational or rationalizing attitude, not on phenomenological data. We shall discuss this below and note that there is much in common with Aristotle's doctrine of 'potentiality' and 'actuality'.

Śaṅkara discusses causality at length in the commentary upon the apparently creationistic passages of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* beginning with 'there was nothing whatsoever here in the beginning'.[410] K.C. Bhattacharyya analysed this passage[411] and we may refer for further details to his discussion. Śaṅkara says that 'nothing' should not be conceived as a mere void (*śūnya*), but rather as 'something'. This follows from the scriptural context and also from the eternity of both cause and effect. Elaborate proofs for both views are given. Even if the text seems to speak about a kind of creation, Śaṅkara infers 'the existence of cause and effect before creation'. In this way the idea of creation become meaningless. The eternity of the cause is plausible when we regard cause as material cause, as Śaṅkara does, and take the example of the clay. For clay continues to exist in the jar. This is subsequently generalised. The eternity of the effect is less obvious. But according to Śaṅkara existence refers only to the manifest state, whereas the effect exists in the cause in the unmanifest state as the form of the jar previous to its production in the clay. It seems that the term 'unmanifest' in this case has no meaning at all. But even if it

410 *naiveha kimcanāgra āsīt; BAU.* 1.2.1.
411 K.C. Bhattacharyya, *Studies in Vedantism*, Calcutta 1909, 26-28.

were meaningful, we are speaking at the level of *māyā* as if this world of names and forms and of causes and effects existed. Actually it is *anirvacanīya* and in Brahman neither cause nor effect has any meaning. Analogously Śaṅkara shows that what is in the future and not in the present is not non-existent, but only unmanifest. If objects lastly would not be eternally existent how would foreknowledge of God or of the *yogin* be possible?

'This elaborate discussion of causality', concludes Bhattacharyya, 'leads to the recognition of Brahman as the material cause of the universe and of the primal hiding principle, co-eternal with Brahman, viz., *māyā*, which by itself is nothing, like the blue tint which seems to pervade objects viewed through blue glasses.[412] But he adds, that the 'dynamic principle' he has been seeking for 'remains undiscovered'. This will occupy us again.[413] That Brahman is the material cause of the universe[414] is more in accordance with strict non-dualism than calling *avidyā* positive or stressing the *nāmarūpa-prakṛti*, which is extremely near to Sāṁkhya. It expresses the same as the doctrine of super-imposition of the 'inessential' upon essence. To say that Brahman (or Īśvara: see below) is the material cause of the universe is the same as saying that Brahman is the *āśraya* of all superimpositions.

The same problems-though with less emphasis upon the theory of causation-are discussed in the *Chāndogyopaniṣadbhāṣya*. First[415] the Upaniṣad says: 'just as through a lump of clay, all that is made of clay would become known;-all products being due to words, a mere name; the clay alone is real....'; and Śaṅkara adds: 'the product (effect) is non-different from its (material) cause....it exists in name only'. This shows that it is irrelevant whether the apparent difference in the effect is ascribed to the form or to the name; both have the same function and are erroneously superimposed upon the one and only real material cause.[416] When discussing the question whether there

412 Id. 28.
413 See below II. 14: 149.
414 Cf. also ad. 1.4. 23-27.
415 *CU.* 6.1.4.
416 With the theory of causation in Śaṅkara it is as with the concept of metaphysics, especially in scholastic philosophy; when he speaks about *pariṇāmavāda* the term cause may refer to cause in general or to the *saguṇabrahman*, and when he speaks about *vivartavada* it may likewise denote cause in general or the *nirguṇabrahman*. Thus when we speak about being, it may either denote being in general (in the *metaphysica generalis*: ontology), or it may denote the divine being (in the *metaphysica specialis*: theology).

was being or non-being in the beginning, he refutes the Vaiśeṣika *asatkāryavāda*, 'the doctrine that the effect is non-existent before its production'. But not only the Vaiśeṣika *asatkāryavāda* (which is obviously unacceptable to Advaita) but also the Śāṁkhya *satkäryaväda* has to be refuted. The differences between these two is brought out more clearly by later Advaitins than by Śaṅkara himself. The latter seems for instance inconsistent when he explains the fact, that Brahman is the material cause of the universe, with the term: *pariṇāmāt*, 'because of transformation', following the term of the *sūtra* upon which he comments.[417] A later commentator, Nārāyaṇānanda Sarasvatī, therefore says that in this passage *pariṇāma* denotes *vivarta*. It would also be possible to interpret Brahman in this passage as *saguṇabrahman*, as is done elsewhere when it is said:[418] 'The view of Brahman as undergoing modifications will, moreover, be of use in the devout meditations on the *saguṇabrahman*'. It would be rather confusing if the qualification *saguṇa* had been left out in the present context. On the other hand, the explanation of this *pariṇāmāt* in the commentary sounds more like *vivartavāda* than like *pariṇāmavāda*. 'The Self, although in full existence previously to the action, modifies itself into something special, viz., the Self of the effect. Thus we see that causal substances, such as clay and the like, are, by undergoing the process of modification, changed into their products'. The term 'Self of the effect' seem to point in the direction of *vivartavāda*, the second sentence again in the direction of *pariṇāmavāda*. No reference is made to the *saguṇabrahman*, but only to cause in general. In Śaṅkara the terms *pariṇāma* and *vivarta* did not yet possess the specific technical meaning which they would later possess.

The position is clearer in a section entirely devoted to the problem of causality,[419] from which several important passages have been quoted already. The *Chāndogya* passage[420] is discussed

417 1.4.26.
418 e.g. Ad. 2.1.4. last Unes.
419 Ad. 2.1.14-20.
420 6.1.4.

again.[421] The products of causation are non-different from the original situation, because 'in as far as they are (new) names they are untrue; in as far as they are clay they are true.' Many objections are again answered, including familiar ones. If there is non-difference of effect and cause and nothing but absolute unity, what happens to the scriptural injunctions and prohibitions? What of the *pramāṇas*? What of the distinction between teacher and pupil? The answer is also familiar: 'These objections we reply, do not damage our position because the entire complex of phenomenal existence is considered as true as long as the knowledge of Brahman being the Self of all has not arisen; .... For as long as a person has not reached the true knowledge of the unity of the Self, so long it does not enter his mind that the world of effects with its means and objects of right knowledge and its results of actions is untrue....' The dialectic of causality is foreshadowed by Gaudapāda in his kārikās, for which reference may be made to Mahadevan's discussion.[422]

The apparently contradicting statements of Śaṅkara can be explained by holding (though Śaṅkara himself is nowhere so explicit) that *pariṇāmavāda* applies to *saguṇabrahman* and *vivartavāda* to *nirguṇabrahman*. *Saguṇabrahman* is called the material cause of the universe, and not *nirguṇabrahman*. This is in accordance with the fact that in the *Vivaraṇa* school Īśvara is called the material cause of the universe.[423] Likewise the *saguṇabrahman* is meant when Brahman is called the efficient cause (*nimitta karaṇa*) of the world.[424] The *nirguṇabrahman* cannot be called a cause and stands in no relation to this world. In the *taṭaṣṭha-lakṣaṇa*, 'definition by accidents' it is called 'that from which the origin, subsistence and dissolution of this world proceed', as in the second *sūtra*: *janmādyasya yataḥ*, where *janmādi* means: *'janman, utpatti* (birth, origin), *sthiti* (subsistence, conservation) and *bhaṅga, nāśa, pralaya* (dissolution, destruction).[425] In other words, Brahman is not the

421 Ad. 2.1.14.
422 *Gaudapāda*, Chapter VI: 'Non-origination'.
423 *Siddhāntaleśasaṁgraha* II 13-14 ap. Mahadevan, *The Philosophy of Advaita* 179; cf. id. 184-187.
424 Cf. ad. I.4.23: *prakṛtiśca*...., 'the material cause also....', which is interpreted as referring to the *nimitta karaṇa*.
425 Ad. 1.1.2.

cause but the locus upon which all causal connections are super-imposed through the erroneous activity of *avidyā*

These ideas are closely connected with the ancient ideas of *karma* and with the Vedic sacrifice. Only the Absolute is really transcendent. *Pariṇāmavāda* expresses the ideas of *saṁsara*, of transmigration and of the efficacy of the sacrifice (cf. also the digestion of the food, which could be called *pariṇāma*). *Vivartavāda*, on the other hand, expresses that we can attain release from *saṁsāra*, from *karma* and from rebirth. Śaṅkara says that 'the works of him who knows Brahman are extinguished,'[426] otherwise it would follow 'that he must necessarily enjoy the fruits of his works and thus cannot obtain release.' Likewise all sin is extinguished. It is characteristic of *mokṣa* and accounts for its desirability (though desire would not bring it nearer it is nevertheless a necessary condition: *mumukṣutvam*): 'and his works are extinguished', as the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* says.[427]

Also in as far as it is opposed to the idea of creation, the doctrine of the non-difference of cause and effect is closely related to the Vedic concepts. Doctrines like *pariṇāmavāda* and *vivartavāda* were virtually contained in many Vedic modes of thought.[428] This explains the relative rareness (in comparison with other religious mythologies) of creation myths in the Veda[429] and also the fact that creation is replaced by, for instance, sacrifice ('the rain, the food, the sperm, etc., are originated from sacrifices'). Creation in general is also looked upon as a sacrifice (Prajāpati).

In refuting creation the great predecessor of Śaṅkara was Gaudapāda. According to him, the creation texts of *śruti* are merely a device (*upāya*) to introduce the true teaching which relates to the non-dual reality.[430] The *saprapañca* is only a

426 Ad. 4.1.2.13.
427 *kṣīyante cāsya karināṇi*: *Mund Up.* 2.2.5 quoted Ad. 4.1.14.
428 Cf. above II 5.
429 Renou and Filliozat noticed the relative rareness of creation myths in the Veda and the relative frequency of vegetation hymns. The latter, related to the Indian climate, are typically continuity-myths, often possessing a cyclical character (cf. M. Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour, Archétypes et répétition*. Paris 1949).
430 *Kārikā* 3.15 ap. Mahadevan, *Gauḍapāda*, 129.

means; the *niṣprapañca* is the end.[431] The main doctrine of Gauḍapāda, for which he adduces several arguments, is *ajāti*, 'non-origination.'[432]

Śaṅkara is equally explicit and clear on this point: for him creation ('with its ether, air, etc.') is unreal.[433] In the commentary upon one *sūtra* he deals almost exclusively with creation.[434] Here the *pūrvapakṣin* mentions a number of apparently conflicting scriptural passages. Śaṅkara reconciles them partly (about the principle of such reconciliation we shall speak below), but concludes with the remark: 'And, to consider the matter more thoroughly, a conflict of statements regarding the world does not even matter greatly, since the creation of the world and similar topics are not at all what scripture wishes to teach. For we neither observe nor are told by scripture that the welfare of man (*puruṣārtha*) depends on these matters in any way; nor have we the right to assume such a thing; because we conclude from the introductory and concluding clauses that the passages about the creation and the like form only subordinate members of passages treating of Brahman'. Elsewhere, the relative validity of the concept of creation is shown by referring to a number of consecutive creations (with their respective dissolutions, *pralaya*), which are 'essentially' the same and which are embedded in the *karma*-doctrine: 'As therefore each new creation is (nothing but) the result of the religious merit and demerit (of the animated beings of the preceding creation), it is produced with a nature resembling that of the preceding creation.'[435]

All this holds for the human being too. Human being is characterized by superimposition; superimposing, it creates a world of names and forms and of causes and effects. This creation is only a manifestation of *avidyā* and *māyā*. The change which a human being may cause or introduce cannot be said to be real- though it may not be possible to call it unreal either. Human being itself does therefore not change either; all change is *anirva-*

431 3.26 *ibid.* 130.
432 See Mahadevan, Chap. VI.
433 Ad. 3.2.4.
434 1.4.14.
435 Ad. 1.3.30.

canīya. This is realized by whoever has attained *brahmavidyā*: then everything becomes nothing, *tucchā*. This is not a transformation but the mere realization of an eternal reality, which was temporarily hidden on account of inexplicable reasons.

13. *Vyavahāra and paramārtha*

One of the most important Advaitic doctrines is the doctrine of *vyavahāra* and *paramārtha*. This doctrine is related to the distinction between *paravidyā* and *aparavidyā* and correspondingly between *parabrahman* and *aparabrahman*. Westerners need special introduction to this topic as they are likely to look without sympathy upon such a doctrine for reasons which we shall have to study too.[436] Some illuminating remarks regarding this can be found in the short introduction to K.C. Bhattacharyya's book and can be recommended to every Western student of Indian Philosophy.

Vedānta in general has a triple scriptural basis, the *prasthānatraya* consisting of *Upaniṣads, Bhagavad Gītā* and *Brahmasūtra*. Advaita is presented as the systematised philosophy which is embodied in these texts. For convenience the doctrine of revelation or *apauruṣeyatva* of these texts will be disregarded and the *ṛṣis* or other human beings will be considered as their authors. This restriction will later be removed. The question then arises as to whether the claim that Vedānta embodies the metaphysical views of these texts means, that every 'author' of an *Upaniṣad* adhered to Advaita Vedānta. This would repeatedly lead to difficulties (e.g., in connection witli the *Gïtä*).[437] But this seems not to have been Śaṅkara's intention either. According to Bhattacharyya,[438] 'Śāndilya, the teacher of the *Śāṇḍilya-vidyā* in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, may not have 'looked upon his doctrine as anything else but a statement of the highest truth accessible to man', 'but that is no reason why Śaṅkara may not look upon it as the inferior wisdom.' This shows clearly that Śaṅkara did not claim to give a

436 See e.g. Thibaut in the introduction to his translation. Also Rāmānuja criticised this doctrine vehemently. See further below III. 7.

437 See above II 8: 95 sq.

438 o.c. viii.

historical interpretation, i.e., an interpretation in which he tried to reconstruct the intentions of a historical author. He did not give *commentaries* but *explanations* by *constructing* a philosophical system on the basis of which every textual statement can be explained and understood. Historians generally misunderstand this since they look upon Advaita also as a historical system ('as a historic curiosity rather than a recipe for the human soul' says Bhattacharyya).[439] But only when we fully realize that Advaita claims to be true[440] are we able to accept that it must in that case attempt to explain everything, including Upaniṣadic statements, whether the contents of the latter themselves embody the Advaitic wisdom or only a 'lower' wisdom.[441] The lower wisdom must be such that it can in principle be extended to the higher wisdom: it may not be incompatible with it as for instance the Bauddha doctrines can be. There is no scope for questioning the sincerity of the *bhāṣyakāra* with regard to the author: Śaṅkara did never hold that Śaṇḍilya was an Advaitin who for opportunistic reasons (as, e.g., Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa) expounded at a certain occasion the lower wisdom-e.g., because of the limited spirituality of his audience. Śaṅkara simply looked upon Śāṇḍilya himself as a man of limited spirituality. śaṅkara himself admits elsewhere that the *Ṛgveda* 'and so on' constitutes only the lower wisdom.[442] This view solves the difficulty of historical interpretation and of sincerity. If this interpretation is right, we ought to translate *bhāṣya* not by commentary but by *explanation*. This seems feasible: *Gītābhāsya*, would mean 'explanation of the *Gītā*' i.e., explanation that the views expounded in the *Gītā* are not incompatible with the views of Advaita Vedānta.[443] What holds for Śaṅkara is likely to hold also for the Ācāryas of the rival schools of Vedānta.[444]

439 id. v.

440 Cf. above 1.3. A.

441 Even the different types of Upaniṣadic seers ought, in principle, to be explained (as Jaspers tries to do for Western philosophy in his '*Psychologie der Weltanschaungen*', referred to below).

442 Ad. 1.2.21.

443 Cf. the terminological differences sometimes made between *bhāṣya, ṭīkā* and *vārtiha*, where the maximal freedom is allotted to the *bhāṣya*. Compare the differences between the 'commentaries' upon Aristotle by Alexander Aphrodisias, Ibn Rushd, Thomas Aquinas, or Sir David Ross.

444 It is the same case, *mutatis mutantis*, with Śrī Aurobindo. When he says ahout Śaṅkara that he 'stresses the aspect of the divine unity' and of the Buddha that he 'stresses the phenomenal character, which is an aspect of this world', he would do a grave injustice to the personalities of Śaṅkara and of the Buddha, who did not 'stress aspects' but who stood for their respective doctrines as total and not partial explanations of reality. But Aurobindo's view becomes acceptable, whether we agree with it or not, if we understand it as an attempt to explain the philosophies and personalities of Śaṅkara and of Buddha in the light of his own philosophy.

This view can also be held when we accept the divine origin, *apauruṣeyatva*, of the text, as the term *śruti* demands. In that case we need not assume that all the seers have received complete revelations: many, or even all, may have been partially enlightened. Śaṅkara's system can be described as an attempt to reconstruct on the basis of partial revelations and with the help of other *pramāṇas*, the real content of the transcendental divine wisdom (*paramārthika paravidyā*).

This practice of the *bhāṣyas* (and we have to be more explicit in this respect than Śaṅkara himself was), is related to the treatment which philosophers generally give to their colleagues. Aristotle for example reviews in the first book of the Metaphysics the Pre-Socratics and Plato, from the standpoint of the causes he discovered himself. Hegel interprets the previous philosophies as steps leading to his own doctrine[445] and explains this entire process itself as the unfolding of Reason. Heidegger never fails to explain why doctrines which he combats (e.g. Descartes or Hegel) had nevertheless to come into being. Jaspers, lastly, in his '*Psychologie der Weltanschaungen*' uses the same practice systematically.

Historians are nevertheless, right when they reject most of these interpretations as unhistorical. It would indeed not be wise to study the Pro-Socratics exclusively from Aristotle, Hegel or Nietzsche-nor the Upaniṣads exclusively from Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja or Madhva. But philosophers may see more deeply than historians.

A doctrine like Advaita, which denies the reality of everything other than Brahman, i.e., which denies itself, its expression, its reasoning, its teaching, its teachers and its pupils-in short, everything which enters our consciousness in as far as we have not yet

445 Cf. again Aurobindo.

entered *brahmavidyā*-such a doctrine cannot abstain from discussing the unreality to which it claims to belong itself. Advaita accordingly enters the *anirvacanīya* world of *māyā* and of *avidyā* and deals with many of the problems which present themselves there. The true answer to all these problems is always the same: they do not exist, as only the Absolute exists. But such answers would fail to satisfy us, and answers are therefore given at the practical level of unreality to which the problems belong as much as we ourselves. Unless Advaita would be altogether silent this is an unavoidable but useful compromise with the 'world'. This explains that the Absolute is in one place declared *nirguṇabrahman* while elsewhere the *saguṇabrahman* is accepted and discussed; or *vivartavāda* is established as the only truth about causation, while elsewhere *pariṇāmavāda* is accepted and discussed. In general there are a higher and a lower wisdom, *para* and *aparavidyā*. 'Lower wisdom' or 'lower knowledge' are here euphemistic expressions: ultimately they are *avidyā*. This follows from the principle of the excluded third which Śaṅkara never denies.[446] In reality the *saguṇabrahman* does not exist and the *pariṇāmavāda* does not hold. The two levels, in which these two kinds of wisdom of knowledge reside and in which the explanations take place, are called *paramārthika* 'the absolutely real (level)' and *vyāvahārika* 'the practical (level)'. They have necessarily to obtain in any philosophy which denies the reality of the world in which we live and which contains us, but which nevertheless presents itself as a philosophy. It existed before Śaṅkara in Nāgārjuna's distinction of *paramārthasatya*, 'absolute truth', and *saṁvṛtisatya*, 'apparent truth'.

Unlike Nāgārjuna[447] Śaṅkara has a second and equally important reason to adopt the view of two levels: he has to *explain* the

446 Cf. II. 11: 120, n. 388. Cf. the term *śabdāntaram* and context Ad. 3.2.21 *in fine*. Cf. also *Śrutisārasamuddharana* (by a pupil of Śaṅkara) 149-150; 'an intermediary entity between *sat* and *asat* does not exist'. P. Hacker, *Untersuchungen über texte des frühen Advaitavāda*, 1. *Die Schüler Śaṅkara's* Akademie der Wiss. und der Lit., Abhandl. der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, 26 Mains-Wiesbaden 1950, 2069. Later the *catuṣkoṭi* (*sat, asat, sat* and *asat*, neither *sat* nor *asat*) are accepted as possible categories.

447 This fact has to be taken into account when it is investigated in how far Śaṅkara (or his *paramaguru* Gauḍapāda) might have been influenced by the great *śūnyavādin*, whose doctrine he combats (e.g. Ad. 2.2.18, 21). It is true that he combats other Buddhist schools more extensively: the *Sarvāstivāda* Ad. 2.2.18-27 and the *Vijñānavāda* Ad. 2.2.28-32. C. above II. 11: 123, n. 397; Ingalls, *Śaṅkara's arguments against the Buddhists* and Murti, o.c. 312-313.

scripture. Since roughly speaking two main views occur there, the best device is to explain their discrepancy by declaring one view as absolutely true and the other as apparently true. The latter view is in fact untrue, but practically speaking a lower view which can be looked upon as a step towards the higher view. In the Upaniṣads for example we find *niṣprapañca* and *saprapañca* views:[448] the first is absolutistic, non-dualistically inclined, looks upon the divine as quality-less and is akin to *vivartavāda;* the second is realistic, creationist, dualistic, looks upon the divine as quahiied and is akin to *pariṇāmavāda*. The first is impersonalistic, the second more personalistic. Śaṅkara's Advaita is the culmination of the first view, but the metaphysical structure of his absolutism enables him to interpret the second view as lower wisdom. This explains that we see that Śaṅkara so often *subordinates* other views, without *rejecting* them. There are however also views which are explicitly rejected and others which are chosen and preferred:[449] Śaṅkara can be uncompromising.[450] Nevertheless he has with the help of this distinction 'synthesized' the scriptural doctrines. He speaks therefore about *samanvaya* 'concord (of the texts)', commenting upon the fourth *sūtra*; *tat tu samanvayāt*, 'but that (Brahman is to be known from scripture), because there is concord'.[451] This is explained in the commentary as follows: 'i.e., all the texts of the Vedānta are concordant (*samanugata*) in establishing the same meaning and in tending towards the same aim (*tātparya*)'.

448 Hiriyanna (*Outlines of Indian philosophy*) classifies the Upaniṣadic doctrines thus.

449 Śrī Aurobindo goes much further in rejecting nothing and subordinating everything. There is a general modern tendency, widespread all over the world but especially in India, to do this. But when support for the all-encompassing attitude, which is more syncretistic than synthesizing, is sought in Śaṅkara, it is forgotten that he vehemently and uncompromisingly attacked Buddhism, Nyaya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṁkhya, etc.

450 Cf. also in connection with the two levels, Śaṅkara's criticism of the view of Bhartṛprapañca and *BAU*. 5.1.1. (transl. Swami Madhavananda 804-805).

451 Thibaut translates *samanvayāt*: 'because it is connected (with the Vedānta texts) as their purport'; Renou, more rightly, 'parce qu'il ya concordance'.

There are however views which cannot be understood properly and adequately when interpreted as ‘lower wisdom’, as for instance the view that the divine is qualified meaning not only that the divine is qualified, *but also* that anything which is not qualified is not the divine and is not higher or more perfect than it. Recognizing the legitimacy of the interpretation of this view prevents it from being regarded as ‘lower wisdom’ along with a ‘higher wisdom’ concerning a quality-less divine. Because of his compromising attitude Śaṅkara comes to misinterpret other views, and though this does not matter very much when historical interpretation is concerned, it becomes very important when an attempt is made (as often throughout the history of Advaita) to prove the supremacy of Advaita over contemporary or later systems (e.g. Viśiṣṭadvaita) by allotting a ‘lower’ place to those system and by subordinating, but not rejecting them. This apparently powerful weapon of apologetics is often bound to fail, as it rejects the exclusiveness which is essential for many doctrines (e.g., the *saguṇa*-doctrine of Viśiṣṭādvaita is essentially incompatible with a higher *nirguṇa*-wisdom). These problems will occupy us again.

The Upaniṣads provide us with a distinction between higher and lower knowledge as applicable to the higher and lower Brahman respectively.[452] They do not state, however, that this duality should be utilized for the interpretation of the Upaniṣadic texts themselves. Śaṅkara clearly goes beyond scripture[453] by adopting a standard with the help of which he explains the scriptural texts themselves. This need not imply that he was necessarily influenced by śūnyavāda (though this is of course possible), but shows that both Nāgārjuna and Śaṅkara adopted on metaphysical grounds the same view of two levels. So there is a metaphysical and a historical reason for the theory of two levels. Next Śaṅkara's own formulation of this doctrine may be examined.

‘Two kinds of knowledge,’ says the Ācārya,[454] ‘are enjoined... a lower and a higher one. Of the lower one it is said that it

452 See e.g., *Svetāśvātaropanisad*, 5.

453 Cf. Thibaut's introduction; esp. cviii sq., together with the remark about Thibaut's opinion concerning *māyā*, in Bhattacharyya's introduction, viii.

454 Ad, 1.2.21.

comprises the *Ṛgveda* and so on, and the text continues[455] "the higher knowledge is that by which the indestructible (*akṣara*) is apprehended".' Two remarks come to our mind: if Śaṅkara looks upon 'the *Ṛgveda* and so on' (*ṛgvedädi*), which probably comprises the entire *śruti* with the exception of the Upaniṣads (and perhaps also *smṛti* apart from the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the *Brahmasutras*) as 'lower wisdom', i.e., in reality as avidyā-this implies that (1) there is no harm in looking upon a sage like Śāṇḍilya as a person of limited spirituality; and (2) there is in as far as the problem of authority is concerned, not so much a philosophical as a practical difference with Buddhism, which rejected *śabdapramāṇa* alltogether. For the greater part of the scripture Śaṅkara does in fact the same (calling it compromisingly and euphemistically lower wisdom), while on the other hand the Buddha could also have found scriptural support in the Vedic tradition. This did not concern the Buddha whereas Śaṅkara had in addition to a philosophical aim also 'worldly' aim, i.e., restoring the unity of Hinduism.

That the latter aim was attained was not due to the purely metaphysical *pāramārthika* doctrine of Advaita, but to its compromising and synthesizing attitude in the practical, *vyāvahārika* realm. Śaṅkara did not reject any part of the Vedic tradition and was therefore welcomed by all who regarded themselves as followers of the *sanātana dharma*. Śaṅkara's philosophical compromise with the *vyāvahārika* realm is connected with the fact that he was not a secluded cave-dwelling sage, as some picture him, but an active and creative mind and a great organiser, who, in a short life, established according to tradition the four *maṭhas* at ŚṚṅgeri, Puri, Dvāraka and Badrināth (and perhaps another one at Kāñcīpuram), expelled Buddhism from Indian soil, founded the six 'cults' still preponderant in Hinduism,[456] established the main orders of *saṁnyāsa*, kept Tantrism within limits and expelled magical practices which had become abundant.[457] In addition he was so sincere

455 It is not known which text; in the context Śaṅkara quotes the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* several times.
456 Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Śākta, Saurya, Ganapatīya, Kaumāra.
457 Cf. above II 10: 110, n. 357. This is the traditional account partly basect upon the *Śaṅkaradigvijaya*. It has little additional evidence to support it. Śaṅkara did not defeat Mīmāṁsā which is still the philosophic presupposition of Hindu orthodoxy, or rather: orthopraxy ('right practice': see J.F. Staal in: *Kairos. Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft und Theologie* 4 (1959) 215-8) is itself primarily a Mīmāṁsā concept. Mīmāṁsā is especially strong in Śaṅkara's birthplace Kerala, called *karmabhūmi* despite Śaṅkara's lifelong struggle against the entanglement by *karma*.

in his compromising attitude[458] that he composed a number of devotional (*bhākta*) hymns,[459] in which the *saguṇa* aspects of the deity are praised. We do not know which of these are authentic and which are spurious.[460] In all these respects it is clear that the *vyāvahārika* realm is an important aspect of Advaita. The paradox therefore arises that a doctrine summarized in the words *jaganmithyā* 'the world is false' is expounded by a *jagadguru* or 'world teacher'.[461]

By his attempts to establish Hinduism as a 'national' religion Śaṅkara shows how in India philosophy influences not only the individual (as is often stressed) but also the country.[462] Despite these *vyāvahārika* efforts, the *pāramārthika* realm denies uncompromisingly that any effort of *karma* may lead to *brahmavidyā*. Almost all Advaitins therefore reject *samuccayavāda*.[463] The later Advaitins pay less attention to the *vyāvahārika* realm, which comes under the jurisdiction of Mīmāṁsā. The aim of Mīmāṁsā in the *vyāvahārika* realm is called *svarga*, whereas the *pāramārthika* realm is the realm of *mokṣa*: 'for the distinction of higher and lower knowledge is made on account of the diversity of their results, the former leading to more worldly exaltation, the latter to absolute bliss'.[464] All concepts related to *karma* and meditation, to Vedic injunctions etc., are transferred to the lower level. The terms Pīrva and Uttara Mīmāṁsā are generally interpreted by Advaitins as referring to the lower and the higher level respectively. Whosoever is incapable of realizing the *nirguṇabrahman* belongs to the *vyāvahārika* level and is hence bound by all that holds and is applicable in this level. 'The lower knowledge which comprises the *Ṛgveda* and so on is mentioned preliminary to the knowledge of Brahman for the mere purpose of glorifying the

458 This is rightly stressed by H. Zimmer in: *Philosophies of India*, London 1951, 460-1.
459 Cf. for example Thomas Aquinas.
460 Cf. above II 11: 116, n. 376.
461 This title is given to the present Śaṅkarācāryas of the *maṭhas*.
462 See further Belvalkar, *Lectures on Vedanta*, 239.
463 See above II 8: 93 sq.
464 Ad 1.2.21.

latter; as appears from the passages in which it (the lower knowledge) is spoken of slightingly, such as 'but frail indeed are these boats, the sacrifices, the eighteen in which the lower ceremonial has been told. Fools who praise this as the highest good are subject again and again to old age and death.'[465] Whoever turns away from the lower knowledge is prepared for the highest one:[466] 'Let a *brāhmaṇa* after he has examined all these worlds which are gained by works acquire freedom from all desires. Nothing that is eternal can be gained by what is not eternal. Let him in order to understand this take fuel in his hand and approach a *guru* who is learned and dwells entirely in Brahman'.[467]

The last 58 *sūtras* of the *Brahmasūtras*[468] are interpreted by Śaṅkara as 'describing the path of the Gods (*devayāna*) which leads those who possess the lower kind of knowledge towards the attainment of their reward'.[469] This describes the fate after death of souls which possess *aparavidyā*. Occasional remarks are added concerning the status of the soul which possesses *paravidyā* and is free from all rebirth.[470] In this connection later Advaitins deal with the difference between two kinds of human beings which have gone beyond lower knowledge: the *videha-mukta* 'released at the moment of death', and the *jīvan-mukta* 'released while embodied'.[471]

The refinement of the theory of two levels into three levels is a natural extension though it is not of great metaphysical importance. It plays an important part in the epistemology of later Advaita. If *vyāvahārika* denotes the sum total of all errors caused by *avidyā*, we have to distinguish those errors which are made

465 *Muṇḍ. Up.* 1.2.7.
466 Id. 1.2.12.
467 Ad. 1.2.21.
468 *Adhyāya* 4, *padas* 2-4.
469 Ad. 4.2.1.
470 In particular with regard to the last three *sūtras* Rāmānuja and Thibaut cannot accept their interpretation as referring only to the soul who possesses a lower knowledge. Thibaut points in this connection at the solemn final *sūtra*: *anāvṛttiḥ śabdād anāvṛttiḥ śabdāt*, '(of them) there is non-return according to scripture; non-return according to scripture'. But the repetition in the end is familiar to readers of the Upaniṣads and the content expresses simply in the succinct *sūtra* style that scripture teaches that the souls, who have reached there, do not return.
471 e.g. the *Jīvanmuktiviveka* of Vidyāranya.

within the *vyāvahārika* level and which may be cleared at that level too: for instance the error of the famous example of taking mother-of-pearl for silver.[472] Such errors are as it were errors of the second degree. What pertains to these errors is denoted by the term *pratibhasika*. According to Murti,[473] the doctrine of these three truths, in Advaita as well as in *vijñānavāda*, is necessitated by the fact, that both analyse first an empirical illusion and then apply this analysis analogically to the world-illusion. ‘The Madhyamika, however, addresses himself directly to the world-illusion....’.

14. *Īśvara*

The *saguṇabrahman* belongs to the *vyāvahārika* level. It was first introduced as the object of *dhyāna* or *upāsanā*, in contradistinction to *nirguṇabrahman* which is the same as its knowledge or *mokṣa*. Also *Īśvara*, ‘God’, is the object of *dhyāna* and *upāsanā*.[474] It seems that *Īśvara* and *saguṇabrahman* are more or less the same. In later Advaita the *saguṇabrahman* is often conceived as *Īśvara* and the world together. A detailed analysis of the denotations of both terms in the *bhāṣya* led Hacker to the conclusion that in Śaṅkara *Īśvara* is a concept that ‘in a strange way resides somewhere between *para*- and *aparabrahman*’.[475] In later Advaita *Īśvara, saguna*- or *aparabrahman* are further specified existentially (1) and metaphysically (2). (1) *Brahmavidyā* is knowledge from which all temporality is excluded, which manifests itself suddenly and which arises on account of its own nature (*svābhāvika*).

472 In the erroneous judgment ‘This is silver’, ‘this’ belongs to the *vyāvahārika*, ‘silver’ to the *pratibhāsika* realm.

473 o.c. 321.

474 See Hacker, *Eigentümlichkeiten* .... 283.

475 Id. 286: ‘*Īśvara* ist bei Śaṅkara sin Begriff, das merkwürdig in der Schwebe steht zwischen *Param* und *Aparam Brahma*’. Such conclusions are important in as far as they establish terminological characteristics of Śaṅkara's language, required when the authenticity of works is to be determined. Metaphysically speaking, in the *pāramārthika* realm *nirguṇabrahman* and *sarguṇabrahman* are the same. When the reality of the world is denied and when everything is ultimately regarded as one and the same, terminological discriminations become less important. This explains that Śaṅkara often disregards the systematical analysis of concepts and likewise definitions as Hacker concluded (‘nach dieser Betrachtung müssen wir als allgemeine Eigentümlichkeit des Denken Śaṅkaras eine Abneiging gegen Definìtionen und eine souverāne Sorglosigkeit gegenüber begrifflicher Systematik festhalten’; id. 285). When discrimination and differentiation are metaphysically adopted the need for terminological differentiation is much greater. The Western Orientalist, whose implicit philosophy is generally a kind of *bhedavāda*, should not expect terminological differentiations where they are not philosophically necessitated.

It can therefore be called intuition, *samādhi*.[476] As this status is not an exceptional phenomenon but the eternal reality only under special circumstances accessible to us, *samādhi* is called *sahaja-samādhi*, 'natural intuition'. Later Advaitins sometimes adopted the Yoga discrimination of two kinds of *samādhi*: *savikalpa-samādhi* 'determinate intuition', and *nirvikalpasamādhi*, 'indeterminate intuition'. The former term denotes[477] that a level is reached where the illusoriness of everything other than the Absolute is realized and where this stage is thereby overcome. The latter term means that even the consciousness of the illusoriness of everything other than the Absolute has disappeared. The first section corresponds to *Īśvara*, who is conscious of the illusoriness of the world in which he operates. The second corresponds to Brahman which is only self-conscious in self-luminosity. Therefore (2) the later Advaitins (e.g. Vidyāraṇya) define *Īśvara* as the Absolute qualified by *māya*.[478] This specifies *guṇa* in *saguṇabrahman*. In the *Vedāmtasāra, Īśvara* is described as the conditioned Brahman which 'experiences joy through subtle modification of *ajñāna*'.[479] This denotes the close connection between the situation of *Īśvara* and *svarga*, the goal reached through the accumulation of good *karma*.

This is in accordance with the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, where all works are conceived as dependent on *Īśvara*: the fruits of action do not spring from the actions themselves but come from *Īśvara*.[480] In any kind of *pariṇāmavāda* actions cannot produce their own effects. This would lead to the assumption of the *apūrva* of Mīmāmsā, which Śaṅkara rejects (in the same context).[481] In

476 The term occurs in *sūtra* 2, 3.39.
477 If we rightly understand Bhattacharyya's interpretation (o.c. 14-16).
478 In the *Vivaraṇaprameyasaṁgraha*: see Mahadevan, o.c. 179; and in the *Pañcadasī*: see Hacker, o.c. 285.
479 Transl. Hiriyanna, 48.
480 Ad. 3.2.38-41.
481 Ad. 3, 2, 40; 'Jaimini (thinks) for the same reason that religious merit (is what brings about the fruits of actions)'.

the *vyāvahārika* realm there is no reason to reject *apūrva*. Therefore Śaṅkara says: 'The final conclusion then is that the fruits come from the Lord with a view to the deeds done by the souls, or, if it be so preferred, with a view to the *apūrva* springing from the deeds'.[482] There is hardly any reason to reject in the *vyāvahārika* realm *apūrva* on account of its magical character, since it is replaced by *Īśvara*, who is himself affected by the inexplicable *avidyā* and who is himself often called a *yogin* or magician.[483]

How can the fruits of action spring from *Īśvara?* This is specified in the commentary upon two other *sūtras*,[484] where Īśvara is called *hetukartṛ*, 'the counsel agent in all activity'. He 'makes the soul act, having regard to the efforts made by it, whether meritorious or non-meritorious'. 'Having regard to the inequality of the virtuous and vicious actions of the souls, the Lord, acting as a mere occasional cause (*nimittatva-mātreṇa*), allots to them corresponding unequal results'. Thus God does not act himself but arranges the whole field of action for the soul: 'The Lord indeed causes it to act, but it acts itself'.[485] From a comparison of the causal activity of *Īśvara* with that of the rain, 'an occasional cause', we see that 'the Lord arranges favourable or unfavourable circumstances for the souls with a view to their former efrorts'. This means that *Īśvara* acts as a *sufficient* cause, not as a *necessary* cause. Hence there is scope for free activity on the part of the souls themselves. Assuming for the moment that *Īśvara* also possesses free activity, the question arises as to whether he will ever use his power to create 'favourable or unfavourable circumstances' according to his own free will. It appears that this is not so as can be concluded from the following interesting passage: 'Moreover, the Lord in causing it to act now has regard to its former efforts previous to that existence; a regressus against which, considering the eternity of the *saṁsāra*, no objections can be raised'. Evidently *Īśvara* always needs the meritorious or non-meritorious *karma*-substance of a previous birth, with a view to which he will arrange the circumstances. This is always possible

482 Ad. 3.2.41.
483 e.g. ad. 1.3.19 (Thibaut translates 'thaumaturg') cf. ad, 2.1.18 and also *Dakṣiṇamūrtyaṣṭakam* 2.
484 2.3.41-42; cf. Hacker, o.c. 282.
485 *kurvanta hi tam īśvara kārayati.*

because of the beginningless nature of *saṁsāra*. Similarly *Īśvara* creates in each creation the *Veda* as it existed in the previous creation.[486] That means that the ancient *karma* theory is not discarded. It remains true that every soul is born in a situation which depends on its *karma* of a previous life. It can act freely during its actual life within the limits of its actual situation and thus create a new amount of *karma*, meritorious or non-meritorious, leading to the situation in which it will be reborn in its next life, etc. Thus *Īśvara* is only an explicatory link in the *karma* theory. Whereas the original *karma* doctrine does not explain the mechanism of causation, Mīmāṁsā gave a partial explanation with the help of the *apūrva* concept. Mīmāṁsākas of the school of Prabhākara were very definite in stating that there can be no connection between '*dharma-adharma*' and a possible God. God cannot control these subtle entities, cannot supervise them and cannot even know them.[487] Śaṅkara saw the insufficiency of the *apūrva* concept as an explanatory factor and introduced *Īśvara* as a conscious agent, who judges the *karma* sum of previous life and creates the birth situation accordingly. Śaṅkara felt that it was impossible to judge (the traditional *karma* theory also implies some judgment of *karma* which remained however unclarified) without affecting the laws of *karma*. In this sense *Īśvara* is justice,[488] but a justice which strictly adds and substracts according to the eternal laws of *karmic* arithmetic. In this theory, there seems to be no room for anything like grace, i.e., the allotment by *Īśvara* of a birth situation, regarding previous merit but disregarding (a part of) previous demerit.

However the main thesis of Advaita is that we can be released from *saṁsāra* by the unpredictable manifestation of *brahmavidyā*, which is not the effect of previous *karma*, but which is *svābhāvika* and *svayaṁprakāśa*. This is exactly the significance which may be given to the term grace, which cannot be primarily characterized (as in the monotheistic religions) as an act of the inscrutable will of God, but which should be characterized as an exception

486 See above II 1: 35.
487 According to the *Prakaraṇa-pañcikā* (137 sq. ap. Jha. *Pūrva Mīmāṁsā*, 45) of Śālikanātha Miśra, a work probably written shortly after Śaṅkara (see id., Appendix 34, 31).
488 See K.C. Bhattacharyya, o.c. 41.

to the rule that there is no effect without a cause in which the effect was not pre-existent, i.e., as an effect not pre-existent in any cause. This would involve an effect without a cause, i.e., a *svābhāvika* phenomenon. Viewed from the *karmic* transmigration in the *vyāvahārika* level *mokṣa* can only arise if the intelligent agent, who creates circumstances on account of previous *karma*, disregards this karmic substance and allows *mokṣa* to take place-i.e., through the mercy of *Īśvara*. This is perfectly consistent.

To these conclusions we are led not so much by expositions of traditional Vedānta as by 'problematic constructions on Vedantic lines'.[489] In the *Sūtrabhāṣya* we find confirmation of the above: 'we must .... assume that final release also is effected through knowledge caused by the grace (*anugraha*) of the Lord'.[490] Moreover a remainder of *karma* does not prevent the occurrence of *mokṣa*.[491] The concept of grace (which according to several critics is alien to Advaita Vedānta) can in Advaita only be explained in the way sketched above. Grace means in this context the occurrence of a causeless phenomenon: *the vyāvahārika anugraha of Īśvara corresponds to the pāramārthika svabhāvikatva of mokṣa*. In the monotheistic religions grace could be described as the occurrence of a phenomenon, not caused by the actions of the creature, but by the will of the Creator. It follows also that *Īśvara* is free because of *mokṣa* (as he allows the occurrence of *mokṣa* by freely disregarding the laws of *karma*).

Another important characteristic of *Īśvara* is his function as a creator. In Mīmāṁsā the existence of a creator is denied.[492] In Advaita we have seen that *nirguṇabrahman* is according to the *taṭastha* definition 'the cause of the origin, subsistence and dissolution of the world', i.e., itself not causally connected with the world, whereas the *saguṇabrahman* can be called its material cause. In later Advaita *Īśvara* is called the material as well as the

489 As Bhattacharyya calls his own *Studies in Vedāntism* (Introduction, v).
490 *tadanugraha hetukenaiva ca vijñānena mokṣasiddhirbhavitumarhati*; ad. 2.3.41.
491 Ad. 3.1.8, *in fine*.
492 See Jha, o.c. 45-52.

efficient cause of the world.[493] Moreover, we may expect a certain kind of creativity in connection with *Īśvara* since *avidyā* and *adhyāsa* are themselves creative activities, whereas *Īśvara* is *Brahman* as qualified by them. Creativity is on the other hand excluded by the perpetual nature of *saṁsāra*: every moment tnat *Īśvara* could possibly create, he faces the pre-existence of merit and demerit caused by souls in innumerable former lives. Moreover the souls are explicitly described as uncreated and eternal.[494] On the other hand, the world is a manifestation of what exists in *Īśvara* in a subtle form (as is illustrated in a Purāṇic myth). But this also is different from creativity.

Theoretically there is the following possibility. If all souls attain *mokṣa* and if there is universal release (*sarvamukti*) this Universe disappears because it is 'universally' realized that it was eternally non-existant (provided there is no good *karma* left in the universe, because in that case *svarga* still subsists). This leads to *mahāpralaya*, 'universal dissolution', and 'afterwards' (though also time will have disappeared in the non-dual Brahman) *Īśvara* can create a new universe in no way connected with the previous one. Because of the perpetual nature of *saṁsāra* we must assume an infinite number of creations and dissolutions. This is often envisaged in Indian speculations (cf. the *kalpas* and *manvantaras*) and signifies perhaps that we have to conceive of creation against a background of the timeless (which we cannot do in our *vyāvahārika* consciousness).

Sarvamukti was a doctrine of some later Advaitins, especially Appayya Dīksiṭa in his *Siddhāntaleśasaṁgraha*. The above possibilities can therefore be realized in his perspective of thought. It seems that Śaṅkara did not believe in the possibility of *sarvamukti*[495] and that therefore these considerations are not relevant to his system. But he did believe in an infinity of creations and universes.[496] That here creation is meant in a relative sense follows from the fact that in the interval between two creations

493 *abhinna-nimitto-pādāna-kāraṇa*: ap. Mahadevan, o.c. 180. In the *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* of Sureśvara *avidyā* is often called *upādāna*: see P. Hacker, *Untersuchungen* .... 1970.

494 Ad. 2.3.17.

495 Cf. ad. 3.2.21; cf. *Pañcapādikā* Introduction xli.

496 See e.g. ad. 2.1.8-9; 1.3.30.

('the night of Brahma', or 'the sleep of Viṣṇu' of the Purāṇas) not only the non-dual Brahman subsists, but also the subtle forms of merit and demerit of the previous creation, i.e., *apūrva* or *Īśvara*. This can be seen from a previously quoted[497] passage: 'As therefore each new creation is (nothing but) the result of the religious merit and demerit (of the animated beings of the preceding creation), it is produced with a nature resembling that preceding creation.[498] Hence neither creation (*sṛṣṭi*) nor dissolution (*pralaya*) are to be conceived in an absolute sense. *Mahāpralaya* is not the same as *sarvamukti* and there neither is creation out of nothing nor are the intervals nothing apart from the non-dual Brahman. All this holds in the *vyāvahārika* level. In the *pāramārthika* level there is no creation at all since creation is a typical *saprapañca* idea.

The question arises as to what these 'relative' creations really signify. *Īśvara* is spoken of in a creationist sense in texts which deal with the *nāmarūpe*.[499] There we read: 'That the highest Lord (*parameśvara*) is he who manifests the names and forms (*nāmarūpayorvyākartṛ*) is a principle acknowledged by all the Upaniṣads'.[500] Hence creation in a 'relative' sense merely means manifestation. The creator transforms the *avyākṛte nāmarūpe* into *vyākṛte nāmarūpe;* therefore he is called *vyākartṛ. Sṛṣṭi* is 'vyākarma'. The unmanifested names and forms are manifested by *avidyā* or *adhyāsa*. Hence creation or manifestation is the same as *avidyā* or *adhyāsa*, and the activity of *Īśvara* is nothing but the inexplicable superimposing activity. This means ultimately that the *āśraya* of *adhyāsa* is Brahman, for *Īśvara* is *saguṇabrahman*. The term *māyāvin*, 'magician', as an epithet of *Īśvara*, obtains therefore the specific significance of: 'he who produces *māyā'*.

In *adhyāsa* superimposition, the superimposed and the superimposing activity (not the locus of superimposition) are the same, and therefore the creative activity and creation are likewise the same. *Īśvara* is therefore both material and efficient cause of the universe. That we make such erroneous distinctions is due to the

497 Above II, 12: 132.
498 Ad. 1.3.30.
499 Cf. above II 12.
500 Ad. 2.4.20; cf. also ad. 1.3.41.

fact that we have personified au impersonal entity. Summarising, we may say that the *vyāvahārika Īśvara* corresponds as a creator to *adhyāsa*.[501]

This implies that creation is not a very important concept in Advaita.[502] It is rather a negative concept too. Creation which is considered a positive activity from the world affirming *vyāvahārika* point of view, is the same as the obscure and negative superimposing activity. This is ultimately an evaluation since the same reality is evaluated differently in the *vyāvahārika* and in the *pāramārthika* realm.

That in *Īśvara* the creative activity, the preexistent material and the (subtle form of) creation are one and the same[503] can also be observed from the use of the concept *śakti* 'power'. This concept is the dynamical principle Bhattacharyya was seeking.[504] Among later Advaitins *śakti* is a power, and at the same time *prakṛti* from which the universe is created: the *śakti* attributed to *Īśvara* is a *bījaśakti*.[505] This power makes the unreal appear as real; it resides in Brahman, but it is *māyā* (as also *māyā* resides in Brahman). Bhattacharyya regards it as a dynamic principle, because he says: 'Brahman existing in the *śakti* becomes the effect: the effect is thus *not* non-existent.' But this is clear, as it has been shown that in the *vyāvahārika* realm not *vivartavāda* holds, but *pariṇāmavāda*. The 'dynamical' creation of the *vyāvahārika* level, which presupposes *pariṇāmavāda*, corresponds to the doctrine of *adhyāsa*, which is in terms of causation the same as *vivartavāda*.

More details could be given if a descent would be attempted from the self-luminous Brahman into the obscure regions of the inexplicable *māyā*. But as it would at the same time be necessary to go beyond Śaṅkara on to the later Advaitins, a mere reference

501 Cf. the attribution of characteristics of *Īśvara* to *avidyā* by Sureśvara (see above 147 n. 493 and below n. 505).

502 See above II 12.

503 'Schöpferkraft Material der Schöpfung und Urzustand des Geschaffenen fallen also zusammen: eine folge substanzialistischen Denkens ebenso wie des *satkāryavāda*': Hacker *Eigentümlichkeiten* .... 274. It is rightly remarked that this identity is also a consequence of *satkāryavāda*.

504 See above II 12 and Bhattacharyya, o.c. 28-29.

505 Hacker, *ibid.* Sureśvara uses for *avidyā* also *bīja* 'seed' (Hacker, *Untersuchungen* .... 1970).

may be made to four different directions in which further specification can be sought: (1) *ajñāna* can be conceived as possessing two powers, *āvaraṇa*, 'the obscuring', and *vikṣepa*, 'the diversifying.' Both are closely connected with the superimposing activity, as can be seen from the *Vedāntasāra*.[506] (2) Either *māyā* itself, or the above mentioned *vikṣepa*, can be conceived as threefold when use is made of the Sāṁkhya categories *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. The resulting cosmogony is described by Dasgupta.[507] (3) The *avyākṛte nāmarūpe* and the *vyākṛte nāmarūpe* in their cosmic aspect can be brought into connection with two other entities of ancient origin, *Hiraṇyagarbha* and *Virāṭ*. Their relation to *Īśvara* is analysed by Mahadevan,[508] (4) The concept of *śakti* can be further developed and two forms of *Īśvara* can be distinguished. This line of thought is followed by Bhattacharyya.[509]

In this way entities of the *vyāvahārika* realm, such as *Īśvara*, conceived as a merciful being or as a creator, can be shown to be actually unreal and can be reduced to the basic concepts of the highest truth, which can in turn be reduced to Brahman and *adhyāsa*, - the latter mysterious entity mysteriously residing in the former. Attributes of God which play an important part in religion, such as grace and creativity, can be interpreted in Advaita. This yields a more detailed picture of the way in which Śaṅkara accepts and sometimes subordinates the Vedic heritage. Despite this development the concept of a central deity such as *Īśvara* even if ultimately denied, and in the *pāramārthika* level devoid of sense, plays a much more important part in Advaita than in the religious feelings of the Vedic period. The reason for this is that the non-dual Brahman becomes *Īśvara* as soon as we speak or think about the universe or about ourselves as individuals. *Īśvara* is God of the universe as the qualified manifestation of Brahman. Śaṅkara's non-dualism is therefore nearer to monotheism than to Vedic polytheism and henotheism (despite the monotheistic tendencies in later Vedic texts, themselves connected with the development of 'proto'-Advaitic ideas).[510] Advaita is, however, a metaphysical

506 Transl. Hiriyanna 48 sq.
507 II. 73-77.
508 o.c. 192-193.
509 o.c. 29 sq.
510 Cf. the famous passage *Ṛgveda* 1.164.46, where the Gods, named variously by the sages, are said to be one.

doctrine and not a religion. It is an exaggeration which is not far from the truth when Wadia says that 'Śaṅkara did not attach any importance to religion'.[511]

The gods of Vedic polytheism are not altogether denied and rejected as in Mīmāṁsā, which considers the deities as 'hypothetical entities postulated as the recipients of the sacrificial offering' and as 'grammatical datives.'[512] But they are, as is also often the case in the Vedas, considered beings of a somewhat higher order than human beings. This may for instance be inferred from the way in which Śaṅkara discusses the problem whether the gods are entitled to knowledge of Brahman.[513] The answer is in the affirmative, whereas the Mīmāṁsakas denied them even this.[514]

Lastly an important problem may be raised in view of the above considerations: is *Īśvara* a person? The answer is in the negative: even in the *vyāvahārika* realm he is not a person. *Īśvara* creates mechanically and both in creation as in supervising karmic results he makes less use of his hypothetical freedom than the souls who perform their *karma*. But even if he could be termed a relative personalization (in the *vyāvahārika* realm) of impersonal entities (in the *pāramārthika* realm), he could not be called a person for the idea of the personal implies and includes that a person is as person more perfect and higher than anything impersonal. Therefore it is impossible to say that the lower God is a person, when the higher Deity is an impersonal Absolute. The notion of the personal itself excludes the supra-personal.[515]

Impersonalism is traditional in India. The idea of *karma* transcends the human individuality. The highest authority, *śruti*, is of *apauruṣeya* origin. The sacrifice is typically impersonal: only the precise and faultless performance of the prescribed ritual act counts and is beneficial, not the intentions of the sacrificer. The

511 A.R. Wadia, *Can Indian and Western philosophy be synthetised?* Philosophy East and West 4 (1954-55) 293 : 292.
512 See above II. 5: 65.
513 Ad. 1.3.26-27.
514 Ad. 1.3.31; cf. Jha. o.c. 308.
515 To say that the Absolute ought to be called supra-personal and not impersonal is, from the point of view of the personal, a mere terminological difference: *nāma eva*.

idea of meditation can be aptly characterised as de-personalization: it is a progressive denial of everything outside the one entity concentrated upon, including attributes of the person of the meditating being.[516] The object of meditation, *saguṇabrahman*, is similarly impersonal, just as *Īśvara* is. This holds especially for the *nirguṇabrahman*, which is without qualities, formless and nameless (or: which is beyond the world of names and forms) and which accordingly can only be described by *neti, neti*.

It is difficult to establish a chronology of personalism and impersonalism in India. 'It is not even possible to show that *Ṛgvedic* texts which present an impersonal first cause or ultimate substratum are older than those in which the method of creation is differently conceived' says Gonda.[517] The same uncertainty prevails with regard to Brahmā, in certain respects a predecessor of the Advaitic *Īśvara* and Brahman.[518]

Though it seems justified to speak about impersonalism in India,[519] it is misleading to hold that Hinduism 'starts with the idea of an impersonal Absolute, Brahman, and only later advances towards the idea of a personal God.'[520]

15. *The jīva. Avasthātraya*

Śaṅkara asserts that 'It is not the primary purport of scripture to make statements regarding the individual soul (*jīva*).'[521]

516 Cf. also Heimann, o.c. 251-252.
517 J. Gonda, *Notes on Brahman*, 62.
518 *Ibid* Chapter VII *passim.*
519 We may add one remark about the *avatāras* of God (especially of Viṣṇu), which are often compared with the Christian concept of incarnation, in order to see in how far justification for such a view can be found in Śaṅkara. In the commentary upon the passage of the *Chāndogya* where 'The Deity, by entering three Divinities through this Living Self, differentiates name and form' is mentioned it is stated: 'It is not right and proper that the Deity .... should deliberately determine to enter-and actually enter-the body which is the receptible of experience .... for suffering painful experiences'. The contradiction with the passion of Christ is evident, and it might be more cautious to translate *avatāra* by 'descent' (as P. Masson-Oursel did.). Cf. also *sūtra* 2.3.46: '(As the soul is affected by pleasure and pain) not so the highest (Lord)....'.
520 Zaehner *op.cit.*, 78 *et passim.*
521 Ad. 1.3.7. (quoted above II Introduction: 33).

We are justified to view this as an expression of his own interest in such matters, about which ordinary experience informs us sufficiently. It is therefore necessary to refer only shortly to the status of the *jīva* and to a few connected topics (especially the *avasthātraya*, 'the three states of consciousness').

The *jīva's* status is characterized by *saṁsāra*, a term which denoted transmigration, became with the Buddha the symbol of all human suffering and came lastly to signify 'empirical existence' in general.[522] But when the *jīva's* status is characterized by *saṁsāra*, the term signifies the '*jīva's* state of immersion in worldliness', as it is expressed by J.L. Mehta (Banaras).[523] The latter compares this with Heidegger's *in-der-Welt-sein*, 'being-in-the-world', which is the first existential in the analysis of human being.[524] Similarly, *saṁsāra* is characteristic for the state of the *jīva*. Just as there is difference between 'world' and 'being-in-the-world,'[525] a difference can be made between *jagat* and *saṁsāra*. Especially Vallabha distinguished between *jagat* as the world in its objective reality, independent from *jīva*, and *saṁsāra* as the *jīva's* bondage and state of immersion in worldliness.[526] Parallels with contemporary phenomenological investigations can be found due to the fact that we enter with the *jīva* a realm which is phenomenologically accessible.

The general cause of *saṁsāra* is *avidyā;* it is therefore discovered and realized as eternally non-existent with the sudden manifestation of *brahmavidyā*. The specific form of this cause in the case of the *jīva* is its *karman*, and the latter's cause is *kāma* 'desire'. Śaṅkara comments upon this passage of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*: 'The human being (*puruṣa*) is identified with desire alone.[527] What it desires, it resolves; what it resolves, it works out; and what it works out, it attains'[528] in the following terms:

522 Mahadevan, o.c. Glossary s.v. 276.
523 In a letter of 1-5-1956.
524 Cf. the author's *An Introduction to the existentialism of Martin Heidegger*, Journal of the Madras University, 28 (1956) 9-35.
525 See Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, III: *Die Weltlichkeit der Welt*.
526 This information I owe to the same letter of Prof. Mehta.
527 *Kāmamaya evāyaṃ puruṣa*. G.N. Jha translates *puruṣa* by 'self' which is rather confusing.
528 4.4.5.

'Other authorities on bondage and liberation say: It is true that good and bad deeds prompted by desire, etc., are the cause of a man's taking a body; still it is under the influence of desire that he accumulates these deeds. When desire is gone, work, although present, does not lead to the accumulation of merit and demerit.[529] Even if he goes on doing good and bad deeds, those, bereft of the desire, produce no results; therefore desire is the root of transmigratory existence'. This is further specified as follows: 'The desire manifests itself as the slightest longing for a particular object, and, if unchecked, takes a more definite shape and becomes resolve. Resolve is determination, which is followed by action'. But as the *jīva* becomes what it does and acts, as the Upaniṣad has stated just before, 'desire is the only cause of its identification with everything as well as of undergoing transmigration.'

When it is said that the soul is identified with desire alone we are on a phenomenological basis. This phenomenon may be phenomenologically identified as the cause of our immersion in worldliness, *saṁsāra*. Desire is not called the cause of the world, *jagat*, so that the above cannot be interpreted as subjective idealism.[530] When *saṁsāra* is understood as transmigration, the phenomenological basis is left behind; but this is not necessary in the present context. When *kāma* and *saṁsāra* are interpreted as ultimately constituting the manifestation and outcome of *avidyā* or *adhyāsa*, we also go beyond phenomenology, and enter the realm of metaphysics.[531] This phenomenological basis points in the direction in which contemporary analysis has gone much further. Husserl stressed the 'intentionality' of consciousness, which was still a relatively formal and intellectualistic characteristic. Heidegger considers *Sorge*, 'care, anxiety', as the 'essential' mode of being of our being. The concept of desire combines very well with the latter concept. Both are equally related to 'attachment', which is the human characteristic we have to overcome in 'detachment' according to Indian metaphysics and ethics in general. The term *kāma*, used in the above context, has come to denote in

529 Cf. the *sarvakarmaphalatyāga* of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.
530 Cf. above II 11, *in fine*.
531 Cf. the article quoted above 153, n. 524.

particular ‘sexual desire, lust’ and refers as such to the strongest kind of human attachment.[532]

This leads to an important question: Is the desiring human being responsible for his desires and their consequences?[533] Answers are virtually contained in some considerations of the previous section: souls act freely and are therefore principally responsible. *Īśvara* allots to them at birth a certain situation, but doing this he merely acts according to the *karmic* results of previous birth. Hence the soul is responsible for its situation and *Īśvara* is not. Where the latter deviates from the laws of *karma* it is only for the good, i.e., for *mokṣa* (never does he disregard good *karma* and stress bad *karma*, sending the soul to damnation). *Īśvara*, therefore is partly responsible for the good. In other words, God is good.[534] Generally speaking, the individual soul is the cause of evil and the Lord is not,[535] because evil is lack of knowledge and *avidyā* and results unwittingly in bondage. This is illustrated by Śaṅkara as follows: ‘No free person will build a prison for himself and take up his abode in it.’[536] But whereas *Īśvara* cannot be held responsible for evil, though he allows it, the problem has in connection with Brahma no meaning at all since ultimately it does not exist. If these two answers are still regarded as unsatisfactory, it must be pointed out that the problem of the theodicee, perhaps the major problem of monotheistic (Jewish, Christian and Muslim) philosophies (i.e., how is the existence of evil and of suffering compatible with the goodness of God?) is merely a theological formulation of the central problem

532 As regards the phenomenological analysis of our physical existence (which was universally neglected, also Heidegger, until Sartre's *L'être ét le néant*, 1943) we find the first phenomenological datum ‘I am the body’ stated and immediately rejected on philosophical grounds in several Upaniṣads (cf. further above II 11: 118) whereas it is assumed that we can speak about a human being as a soul, *jīva*, whether embodied or disembodied (e.g. ad. 4.4.10-14; cf. ad. 3.3. 53-54 and ad. 4.2.12-14).

533 Cf. also Lacombe o.c. 255 sq.

534 Cf. *sūtra*. 2.1.34; ‘Inequality (of dispensation) and cruelty (the Lord can) not (be reproached with ....)’. To ‘allow’ (*anujñā*, ‘permission’, cf. Lacombe, o.c. 256, n. 5) evil or to allow *mokṣa* (which does not arise on account of merit) however might be called ‘inequality’.

535 Ad. 2.1.21-23.

536 Ad. 2.1.21.

of Advaita, i.e., why is there *avidyā*? To this the Advaitic answer is that there is no answer and that *avidyā* is *anirvacanīya*.

If we forward the claim of a phenomenological basis, i.e., Husserl's claim that our point of departure should be any entity as immediately present to us in our consciousness, Advaita will readily make this claim its own. But in addition to that it will point out that we unnecessarily limit ourselves to one state (*avasthā*) of consciousness, namely the waking state. Advaita bases itself upon a fourfold experience by adding also the dream state, the state of dreamless sleep, and lastly, transcending all these, the 'fourth state', *turīya*. A few remarks concerning this important topic must suffice here, as much literature on the subject exists and as especially Bhattacharyya has made this his main approach to the problem of Advaita.[537]

The dream state (*svapna*) is mainly considered in two kinds of context: (1) it exemplifies a total change of consciousness, as occurs in *brahmavidyā*, and thus it is in the same way related to the waking state as the latter to the state of *mokṣa*. The dream state is daily sublated, the waking state is daily sublated to make place for the dream state but is also in a different way sublated under exceptional circumstances.[538] (2) The dream state is a good example of the effects of *karma*: 'That state of sleep during which one sees dreams, is "Dream-cognition" which is accompanied by pleasure, pain and as such is the effect of merit and demerit....as for merit and demerit again, they can be productive of such effects as pleasure and pain and their cognition only through the momentum imparted by ignorance and desire, never other-

537 o.c. 1-17 ('An approach through psychology'); Likewise R. Guénon, *L' Homme et son devenir selon le Védānta*, beginning chapters, dealing with the *Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad*, where the three states are symbolically represented by the three letters A, U, M constituting the sacred syllable *OM*, together with its essence, the fourth state, *turīya*. See also *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 3.2.1-10 and *BAU* 2.1.15-19; 4.3.9-34 and *CU* 6.8.1; 8.6. 3-4; 8.10.1, etc., with Śaṅkara's commentaries. Cf. B. Heimann, o.c. 130-145, (*Die Tiejschlaf-Spekulation der alten Upanischaden*). It was a preferential topic of Gaudapāda in his *kārikās*: see Mahadevan, *Gauḍapāda*, Chapter IV. Cf. also Deussen, o.c. Chap. XXVIII (special states of the soul).

538 Bhattacharyya, o.c. 3.

wise'.[539] This interpretation is principally the same as the much more specific dream interpretations of Freud or Jung.

The state of dreamless sleep (*suṣupti*) is an important state of consciousness analogous to the state of *brahmavidyā* or *samādhi*. Not as if the idea of the latter would be copied from the former and as if Advaita would strive for a kind of deep sleep for the human being,[540] but in so far as both are *negatively* the same: the world of diversity and of external and internal impressions has disappeared. In addition the absence of suffering produces the positive phenomenon which makes us say after waking up from sleep: 'Happily did we sleep; we knew nothing in our sleep'.[541] But there can be no doubt that we are in *suṣupti* also in the realm of *avidyā*. It is sometimes stated, rightly but somewhat misleadingly, that in sleep we are Brahman without our knowing it. This gives the impression that the state of *samādhi* is almost the same as sleep. Actually this description applies generally: we are always Brahman without knowing it. The difference is clearly described by Bhattacharyya:[542] 'In both, the consciousness of duality lapses; in both the self enjoys undifferenced bliss; in both, the timeless seeds of knowledge and action (*vidyā-karma*) persist, accounting for the recognition of the past on awakening from them. But whereas on awakening from *suṣupti*, the self remembers that it was in the attitude of knowing object though the object there was a blank,[543] on rising from *samādhi* it ought to remember it *was* the object in that state and not in the object-knowing attitude at all. In the former, the self as always limited was simply isolated; in the latter, it burst its bonds, destroyed the barrier between subject and object, and became the absolute.'

Attempting an evaluation of these different states of consciousness as a possible basis for philosophical considerations, it has first of all to be borne in mind that whatever state of consciousness is our apparent starting point in any investigation, the waking state

539 Śaṅkara ad. *CU*. 6.8.1.
540 An opinion to which B. Heimann sometimes seems to come dangerously close.
541 Mahadevan o.c. 160.
542 o.c. 15.
543 This is said more often, but it seems questionable whether this formulation conveys any meaning.

records it. We know any state only in and through the waking state. We analyse whether for instance a certain dream image is a dream experience or not. But it never is, whatever the appearance may be. For only through conscious reproduction in memory in the waking state do we record it as an image. We do not only speak and write about it in the waking state, but we know it only in the waking state. To say that we know it in the dream state as such has no meaning, because we can only say this in the waking state whereas we would be unable to express it in the dream state. An introspective analysis of the rare cases where we seem to be conscious in our dream consciousness of the fact that we are dreaming, shows that we are only apparently conscious of this and not in fact realising that we are lying in a bed or on a mat and producing or reproducing mental images.[544] It is likewise evident that no statements are made in a dream which are as such meaningful; they may in some cases become meaningful through further analysis and interpretation in the waking state. Likewise no scriptural passage concerning the dream state has been actually produced during that state. All the preserved texts can be shown to constitute pieces of conscious reflection produced in the waking state concerning memories from the dream state, recorded and recognised as such in the waking state. The dreaming state does not supply immediate information, but mediate information through the waking state.

Because of these considerations we must assign an unquestionable priority to our consciousness of the waking state, a priority which is in the first place methodological. In Western Philosophy this is formulated in the following claim: any philo-

544 The author may be permitted to recall one of his dreams: ‘I am flying in an aeroplane together with several people. I address them and say, that we are not really flying, but that it is only my dream’. The analysis in the waking state of the dream souvenir convinced me that the words which I spoke in the dream were merely words, the meaning of which I did not understand at that moment. Why should I otherwise address people expressing this truth, when I had realised that these people were only mental images in my dream? But why also did I have, after awakening, the common sensation which comes as a sudden and new realisation: it was a dream-if I had really known already during the dream that it was a dream?

sophical view or doctrine is ontically founded in the situation in which we *are* when we philosophize.[545]

Analogous considerations hold with regard to *mokṣa* where a paradoxical situation arises. Advaita is a speculative metaphysical system which aims at offering a rational world view and an explanation of all known phenomena. But the final proof of the truth of Advaita cannot be given on metaphysical grounds; it lies in the Advaitic experience. In that situation we realize, that Brahman is real, the rest unreal; the whole of Advaita can be deduced from this simple statement.[546] But *brahmavidyā* and the waking consciousness in which we are when we philosophize, are incompatible: the one excludes the reality of the other. All thinking is bound to occur in the waking state. We may try to solve this difficulty by preferring the Advaitic experience and by giving up philosophizing and thinking; but even such an act of preference is a philosophizing act in the waking state. When Advaita claims that an experience in another state than the waking state constitutes its final justification, this poses a methodological problem - though it may be perfectly real and true at the same time. However we cannot prove or refute this, since proof and refutation are only possible in the waking state.

If we would actually possess the Advaitic experience it would be incommensurable with any possible content of waking consciousness. However our knowledge and interpretation of this state occur in the waking state only. But then the experience cannot be decisive as to its philosophical (that is: 'communicative'[547]) interpretation. The two are incommensurable and therefore

545 Cf. the article quoted above 153, n. 524: 13. n. 10. This was announced e.g. by Schelling (who did not always follow his own prescript): 'Alles Ūberfiiegen unseres jetztigen Zustandes, jedes Wissen, des nicht eine Entwicklung aus dem gegenwärtigen Wirklichen ist .... ist verwerflich und führt zu Schwärmerei und Irrtum' (Werke IX 30).

546 In the well known lines which give a summary of Advaita:

brahma satyam jagan mithyā
jīvo brahmaiva nā'parah-

the second can be derived from the first: if we express the first truth, there must be something real in us expressing this. But this reality must be the essence of our being then, our *jīva*; and as everything different from Brahman is *mithyā*, the *jīva* cannot be different from Brahman.

547 Without communication philosophy ceases to be philosophy. Jaspers' insistence on *Kommunikation* in this respect is not dissimilar from Wittgenstein's criticism of the concept of private language.

different interpretations of the experience can be given. In addition there is another difficulty: we do neither know, nor are we able to judge, whether there is only one experience like *samādhi* which was differently interpreted by Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, etc., or whether there is an Advaitic, a Viśiṣṭādvaitic experience, etc. The evaluation of different experiences of this kind can only be given during the waking state. The evaluation of the Advaitic experience can never immediately follow from this experience itself.

Though the Advaitic experience cannot philosophically *justify* the system of Advaita, it may well constitute the basic experience to which the system leads. We must distinguish between two points of view regarding a state of consciousness which is different from the waking state. The one accepts the state of consciousness as a *datum*, just like any other experience.[548] The other invokes it as proof for a certain view. We have no justification for contesting the validity of the former.[549] But we can contest the validity of the latter since validity of a proof is a matter of logic and occurs entirely within the waking state. Similarly we cannot contest that Columbus discovered land; but we need not accept that the land he discovered was India. The interpretation given in Advaita of the Advaitic experience is *consistent* with the philosophic tenets of the system; but neither is *based* upon the other in the philosophical sense. Śaṅkara seems to have been aware of this for, unlike some other philosophers, he nowhere invokes the Advaitic experience as a proof for his doctrines. Neither Śaṅkara nor the later Advaitins recognized mystical experience in any Western sense as a *pramāṇa*. This may have puzzled some Western observers, but is the outcome of a sound philosophic outlook. It need not of course prevent Advaitins from considering *mokṣa* the authentic mode of human existence and the ultimate aim of man.

548 Śrī Aurobindo deals with different kinds of these experiences in a manner which cannot be checked phenomenologically. I cannot agree in this respect with J.N. Mohanty, who holds that Aurobindo provided a ‘phenomenology of mysticism’. On the contrary, almost none of the experiences Aurobindo describes are phenomenologically given to the reader's consciousness. The validity becomes a matter of belief and probability (see: J.N. Mohanty, *Phenomenology in Indian Philosophy*, Proceed. Xth International Congress of Philosophy, Bruxelles 1953, XIII 255-62).

549 H. Bergson (in: *Deux sources de la morale et de la religion*) regards mystical experience as the main evidence in support of the view that God exists.

Part III
A Comparison between Advaita and Neoplatonism

Introduction

In the previous part a sketch of the principal doctrines of Advaita was given. In this part a comparison of these ideas with the Neoplatonic doctrines as expressed in the Enneads of Plotinus will be made. Occasional reference is made to some of the other Neoplatonists (e.g. Proclus and Damascius). It is not feasible to put forward a description and discussion of the metaphysics of Neoplatonism in the same way as for Advaita. Many topics which could not play any part in the comparison intended would have to be included. Therefore the following method will be adopted: every topic of Advaita as discussed in the second part will be discussed in connection with Neoplatonism in this part: The order of topics will be principally the same, so that sections of the third part correspond (not numerically as their length is often different) with those of the second part. But a different system of thought does not always allow such a transposition. Therefore the parallelism has been abandoned where it became artificial. The reader will do well to refer occasionally to the sections of the second part.

This method would seem to constitute a comparison between two entities placed on an unequal footing and to do a phenomenological injustice to Plotinus' philosophy. But some knowledge of the general tenets of Neoplatonism is assumed. Moreover[1] the principal aim of this work is to study Advaita. This cannot be satisfactory and critical, as pointed out in the first part, if it is not comparative; and for reasons also stated there the Neoplatonic doctrines provide the best basis of comparison for a Western approach to Advaita. As a consequence of those preliminaries the 'tertium comparationis' cannot be left out of consideration. Hence in this part more than in the last, contemporary and, in general, later philosophical ways of thought will occur. In this respect the

1 See above I, 1.

present study could have been called ‘A critical and comparative study of Advaita - with special reference to Neoplatonism’ - were it not that the Enneads play an important part in the whole work.

A student of Advaita must know what constitutes its background and has therefore to turn especially to the Brāhmaṇas, the Upaniṣads and Pūrva Mīmāṁsā. A student of Neoplatonism must first turn to Platonism; but then also to Parmenides[2] and Aristotle,[3] both forerunners of Neoplatonism. This background will not be systematically studied here, but will frequently be referred to.

1. *Evaluation of the tradition. Action and contemplation*

It seems at first sight that nothing like *śabdapramāṇa* occurs in Plotinus because in general the Greeks did not accept authority and were convinced of the value of free thought, investigation and speculation. Moreover, the form of Plotinus' writings seems to point in the same direction; they were not commentaries, but independent investigations into philosophical topics, often suggested by somebody in the audience.[4]

This view cannot be maintained unless it is subject to some modification. First the term Neoplatonism implies that a certain authority must have been attributed by the Neoplatonists to Plato. In addition there are Neoplatonic commentators, for instance Proclus (who wrote important commentaries upon the Timaaus, the Parmenides and other Platonic dialogues). Lastly Plotinus himself refers always to Plato as (*ho theîos Platōn*), ‘the divine Plato’, and always quotes him uncritically without questioning the validity of his affirmations.[5] He tries to show how his own opinions are in accordance with those of Plato:"....we will now give our opinions concerning this matter, attempting to bring them back

2 See J.F. Staal, *Parmenides and Indian Thought*, Philosophical Quarterly 28 (1955), 81-106.
3 Cf. below III, 1, etc., P. Merlan has proved the existence of an ‘Aristoteles Neoplatonicus’ (P. Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*, The Hague 1953, Chapt. VII and conclusion); see below, Appendix 249.
4 See Porphyry, *Vita Plotini* 13, 15-17 (Bréhier).
5 Cf. e.g. III: 5.1.5-7 (Bréhier).

(*anágein*) to the opinion of Plato,[6] or: 'Thus it seems according to us; and thus it is in accordance (*sumphōnos*) with Plato's opinion.'[7] There is sufficient justification for comparing this Plotinian *sumphōnia* with the Advaitic *samanvaya* of all texts. Plotinus also declares himself a traditionalist: 'We have undoubtedly to believe that the truth has been discovered by some of the ancient and blessed philosophers.' But he adds; 'It is advisable to see who were those who found it and how we can ourselves reach it.'[8] He sometimes quotes a number of important previous philosophers in a somewhat traditionalistic spirit.[9] But he mostly refers to Plato himself. Sometimes Plato is not mentioned but understood, as for example where Plotinus speaks about 'teachings received from the ancient thinkers.' Here he wants to show that his own thesis is 'in accordance (*śúmphōnos*) or at least not incompatible (*díaphōnos*) with them.'[10] From these passages we conclude that the Corpus Platonicum constitutes the *śruti* for Plotinus, whereas in certain respects he looks upon his own work as *smṛti*.

In general, the traditional attitude was relatively rare among most Greek philosophers from Thales to Aristotle. There were schools, as there have always been in the development of philosophy, where pupils followed the masters; but philosophers among the former did not, as far as we know, explicitly claim the infallibility of the founder, with the possible exception of the Pythagoreans (*autòs éphē*). There is some truth in Nietzsche's remark that the early Greek philosophers were lonely giants who called each other over empty intervals of thought. This reveals the difference that exists between the development of early Greek thought and the development of philosophical traditions which grow side by side, e.g., in the Christian and Muslim middle ages and in *āstika* Indian philosophy.

In Aristotle the absence of the traditional attitude manifested itself perhaps most clearly. He is able to see continuity (with all Greek predecessors in the first book of Metaphysics and with Plato everywhere), but he does not hesitate to differ. With Plato and

6 VI. 2.1.4-5.
7 VI. 3.1.1-2.
8 III. 6.1. 13-16.
9 E.g. V. 1.9.
10 VI. 4.16. 4-7.

Aristotle the Academy of the Platonists and the Lyceum of the Aristotelians came into being together with a certain kind of traditionalism. The two great thinkers were looked upon as the masters; however, it was in principle not impossible to surpass them. By Plotinus' time, the third century, traditionalism had become widespread; it is, as Bréhier expressed it,[11] an age of commentators.

At the same time the concepts of the Golden Age of Hesiodus and the Age of Kronos of Plato are raised to a philosophical status and manifest themselves with a seriousness, which reminds us of the four *yugas* of the Hindus. The ideal time was considered to have existed at the beginning, and there was no progress or evolution. ‘If the things become gradually better, they were evidently not good in the beginning! Or if they were good, they have to remain always identical with themselves.’[12]

This parallelism might be explained by observing how both in Greece and in India the ‘classical’ age existed before the times of Plotinus and Śaṅkara respectively though the interval of time elapsed in each case is not the same. Both could look back for a ‘golden age’ to earlier manifestations of cultural activity. Belief in a past golden age cannot be expected to arise during the first creative periods of a civilisation.

It is probable that we have to look deeper[13] and that Neoplatonic and Advaitic traditionalism depend consciously or unconsciously upon the concept of time as a cyclical phenomenon, where progress or evolution is never ultimate and there is degradation within each cycle. Modern consciousness on the other hand has as one of its main constituents a concept of time which originated and developed mainly under Christian influence.[14] In early Christianity, which

11 E. Bréhier, *La philosophie de Plotin*, Paris 1938, Chap. I: ‘âge des commentateurs’.

12 VI. 7.2 (?) ap. Bréhier, o.c. Chap. I.

13 The explanation of the difference on account of the acceptance or rejection of authority is not sufficient: it was accepted in the Christian and Muslim middle ages and, on the other hand, rejected by all *avaidika* schools in India,-Cf. also the author's *Over het cyclische en het rechtlijnige tijdsbegrip*.

14 It is not merely the outcome, as some say, of nineteenth century optimism and belief in universal progress.

was like early Islam characterised by an atmosphere of ‘eschatological expectation’, time is rectilinear and qualified by a few well-marked phenomena, each of which is unique: creation, incarnation of Christ, day of judgment. In Antiquity this attitude was mainly absent, with few exceptions (i.e. Polybius and cf. Thucydides).[15] In the West it is predominant (all the main social and political currents of the day depend on it), and exceptions are extremely rare (e.g. reactionary movements like the traditionalism of R. Guénon, F. Schuon and others). The modern Western judgment of Advaitic and Neoplatonic traditionalism depends on this rectilinear concept of time, which is also the main attitude in philosophy. This is not only explicit, as abundant examples could show, but also implicit, e.g.: ‘to understand Kant means to go beyond him’ (the attitude of Neokantians, which is quite different from that of Neoplatonists). When, on the other hand Neo-advaitins and Aurobindo adopt a more evolutionary view, it is due to the influence of the nineteenth century West (which is still extremely great in India) and perhaps also to the missionary activities of Christianity and Islam (which is less likely, as the rectilinear concept of time seems to be almost absent from the consciousness of Indian Christians and Muslims). The susceptibility to such an influence may be explained by the fact that a not very important ‘eschatological expectation’ existed in India also, connected with Maitreya (among Mahāyānists) and Kalkī (among Hindus).[16]

As for a theory of transmigration, it is well known that the Pythagoreans believed in metampsychosis. Xenophanes ridicules this theory and relates how Pythagoras recognised the soul of one of his former friends in a dog.[17] Empedocles subscribed to the same doctrine in his *Katharmoí* ‘Purifications’. Plato's doctrine of remembrance or recollection (*anámnēsis*) presupposes preexistence of the soul in a higher world, and one of his main topics is the immortality of the soul. Both subjects are illustrated by myths, as for instance the myth of Er in the tenth book of the *Republic*. There we find the doctrine of rebirth referred to,

15 See e.g. S. Lauffer *Der antike Fortschrittsgedanke*, Actes du XIème congr. internat. de philosophie, Bruxelles 1953, XII, 37-44.
16 Cf. in general I. 3. C.
17 Fragment B 7 (Diels).

moreover the souls are given retribution according to actions performed during their earthly life. Tnere is no elaboration of this doctrine analogous to the Indian systematisation and no concept like beginningless *saṁsāra* has been evolved. Plotinus follows Plato in these matters.

Though it is impossible to explain Neoplatonism like Advaita mainly as a revolt against the supremacy of *karman*, Plotinus has nevertheless definite views about the place to be allotted to activities. This will again be dealt with in three stages: sacrifice, meditation and knowledge.

Plotinus did not belong to an ancient and established religion with a caste of priests, with temples and sacrifices (though such entities did exist in Rome). However during his age, there was an invasion of Oriental cults in the Roman Empire (such as Gnosticism and other forms of Christianity), which Plotinus opposed.[18] Moreover the character of the Stoa became increasingly religious; it prescribed prayers and the abandonment of man to God and it conceived of a philanthropist God. These developments were also rejected by Plotinus. Concerning prayers, he has expressed his opinion in a curious passage, where their impersonal, ritualistic and unintentional character is stressed. It is manifest that they do not belong to the philosophical, but to a magical realm. The effect of prayer, says Plotinus, neither depends on the will of the God i.e., a heavenly body, nor on the intention of the believer, but on the correctness with which the prayer is performed.[19] 'In the stars (i.e. in the Gods) there is no will to answer our prayers.... Their powers are used without will, whether they are provoked (by us) or not, through a scientifically efrective procedure (*tékhnē*) ....the performer may be a bad person (*kakós*)-it need not surprise us; bad people fetch water from the rivers; the being which gives, does not know that it gives; it simply gives'.[20] This *tékhnē* is an impersonal ritualistic act, which can be compared to the *tékhnē* of doctors and of magicians (*epaoidoí*). The explanation of the efficacy of prayers lies in the fact that the whole universe is one and is like one organism. 'The universe thus gives to its parts,

18 Cf. the well known treatise 'Against the Gnostics': II. 9.
19 See Bréhier's notice ad. IV. 3, p. 53.
20 IV. 4.42. 3-4, 6-8, 14-17.

whether by itself or through some influence....he who prays for some influence is himself not separate from the universe'.[21] 'Prayer is effective because one part of the universe sympathises with another part, as in the stretched string (of a lyre), where the vibration moves from below upwards. Often also, when one string vibrates, another one perceives the vibration as it were, because they are tuned in accord and harmony. If vibrations even move from one lyre to another, it can be seen how far the 'sympathy' (*sumpátheia*) stretches. In the universe too there is one universal harmony (*mía harmonía*) even if it consists of contraries....'[22]

The Plotinian universe starts by being the *kósmos* in the established Greek sense, and become one wonderful organic harmony (*harmonía*), like a symphony (*sumphōnía*) held together in universal sympathy (*sumpátheia*). As early as Chrysippus in the Stoa, this idea was called 'sympathy of the whole (s)', *sumpátheia tōn hólōn*.[23] If we disregard its well ordered and esthetic character, which is the heritage of the idea of *kósmos* and of the artistic ideals of Hellas, we are left with a universe which is unified, the parts being related by magical connections;[24] it resembles the universe of the Brāhmaṇas. But the similarity is still more striking in the idea of the ritual act (*sat*), where it is the exactness (*satyam*) which counts and not the intention of the sacrificing priests. The 'visible' Gods i.e., the heavenly bodies, are according to Plotinus, like mechanical parts or organs of an organism-like universe-almost the 'hypothetical entities' of Pūrva Mīmāṁsā.

In another passage Plotinus shocking and surprising those who heard him, expressed his opinion of the Gods and showed his personal feelings about sacrifices. His pupil Porphyry[25] records in his biography: 'Amelius was a lower of sacrifices (*philothútos*), who would neither miss the New Moon offerings nor any of the recurrent festivals. Once he wanted to take Plotinus with him, but the latter answered: 'It is up to the Gods to come to me; not

21 *Ibid.*, 11-14.
22 IV. 4. 41-1-8.
23 Cf. K. Reinhardt, *Kosmos und Sympathie*.
24 There are magical connections in Plotinus: see below, and the Index attached to the edition of Bréhier, s.v. Magie (VI, 2, p. 272).
25 *Vita Plotini* 10. 33-38.

up to me to go to them'.[26] What the mentality (*dianoía*) underlying these proud words was we could neither understand, nor did we dare to ask. It is remarkable how near the Mīmāṁsakas are to those *philothútoi* and how close their opponent Śaṅkara is to Plotinus. The pride attributed to Plotinus resembles the uncompromising attitude of the Advaitin, who rejects the *samuccayavāda* which combines sacrifices and knowledge.

Though these isolated passages do not form an integral part of the metaphysics of the *Enneads*, as the rejection of *karman* does in Advaita, they throw much light on the mentality of Plotinus and show how like Śaṅkara he reacted against any formal ritualism.

The relation between action (*prâxis*) and contemplation (*theōría*), is not a central topic of the *Enneads* but is the object of metaphysical considerations and forms the subject of almost all the chapters of the treatise, 'About nature, contemplation and the One.'[27] We propose to give an analysis of this treatise as it deals with the problems concerned and gives at the same time an excellent introduction to Plotinus' thought. In the next section we will discuss the material which is thus made available. The analysis follows the text rather closely and a general survey of the significance of its ideas is not given in advance: the reader is first invited to judge for himself.

Chapter 1. The thesis is put forward that all beings desire (*ephíesthai*) contemplation (*theōría*) and aim at that end. The reason is that they are themselves the outcome of contemplation. This will be discussed with particular reference to some fundamental entities[28] such as nature (*phúsis*), soul (*psukhḗ*) reason (*lógos*) and lastly with reference to intelligence (*noûs*)[29] and the one (*hén*).

Chapters 2-4. Nature like reason produces while remaining immobile. Like reason it is not an activity. (*prâxus*), but a contemplation (theōría). This is however a kind of contemplation which is a production (*poíēsis*) or generation (*génnēsis*). If nature could

26 *ekeínous deî prôs emè érkhesthai, ouk emè prôs ekeínous*.
27 III. 8: *Perí phúseōs kaí theōrías kaí toû henós*. Cf. R. Arnou, *Prâxis et theōría*, a book which was unfortunately not available to me.
28 Discussed in this order in the Stoa.
29 This special Plotinian term may be left untranslated.

speak, she would explain this as follows: ‘When I contemplate, the traces (*grammaí*) of the bodies (*sōmata*) come into being (*huphí stanai*) as if they fall from me (*ekpíptein*).[30] ‘I am myself born from a similar non-active contemplation’. Thus silently nature produces its own object of contemplation ‘in all its splendour and grace’. This contemplation is higher than any activity: ‘Also human beings, if their (power of) contemplation becomes feeble, come to action, which is a shadow (*skiá*) of contemplation and reason’.[31]

Chapters 5-7. The relation between action and contemplation is further discussed and applied to the soul: action follows and derives from contemplation; it is weakened contemplation, Conversely, contemplation which is the principle of action is also its goal. Acting with such a goal, the soul ceases to act; it does not continue striving, it is full (‘filled’: *plērōtheîsa*); it possesses its contemplation internally....thus unity is introduced in it; the more unity, the more calm it is. Then the knowing part of the soul (*ginōskon*) is one with what is known (*hèn tōi gnōsthénti*).

The soul has greater powers of contemplation than nature. But it seeks further, abandons contemplation and goes to the multiplicity of things. After this it returns and contemplates with its superior part, which it has abandoned. ‘This does not happen, however, when the soul remains in itself. The sage therefore.... manifests to others only what he finds in himself; his sight is turned towards himself (*pròs autòn ópsis*). He isolates himself from the outside world (*éxō*), turning towards the One and quietness. He turns towards himself and finds everything inside (*pánta eísō*).’[32]

Chapter 8. The soul finds unity with its object only in its superior part. But contemplation is more unified (*henouménos*) in the *nous*. The soul does not have plenitude (*ou plḗres*) but is inferior to the *nous* which is prior to it. In the *nous* there is no difference between subject and object at all. Therefore it is said: ‘The same is being and thinking.[33] But this unity and contem-

30 4.9.10.
31 4.32: *skiàn theōrias kaí lógou tēn prâxin poioûntai*. (Quoted as typical for the difference between Neoplatonic and Christian mysticism by H. Bergson in: *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion*).
32 6. 36-40.
33 8.8. Parmenides: *taũtòn tô eînai kaí tô noeîn eînai*.

plation, which is ‘thought’ or ‘intellection’ (*nóēsis*), is also life (Zōē) as it was in nature. Thus there is a first intellection, a second, etc, and likewise a first life, a second, etc.

The *nous* itself is a product of becoining (*gínetai*) and by contemplation it enters again into multiplicity: it unfolds itself. It is therefore not the primary (*prōtos*) and highest entity.

Chapters 9-11: Beyond the *nous* therefore is the One (*tó hén*). It is neither intelligence nor intelligible, for it is that from which intelligence and all intelligibility originate. It is good and simple, known only through the *nous*. It can be known by what in us resembles it. As principle of all beings it can only be beyond being. It is the (*dúnamis*) (power, potency) of everything. ‘Imagine a well (*pḗgē*) without origin; it gives itself (*hautḗn*) to all rivers; but it is not diminished by that, it remains quietly in itself......’[34]

2. *Interiorisation. Non-dualism and the hierarchy of being*

The topic of the above treatise on contemplation can be developed, with reference to Advaita, in several directions. It is a true specimen of the Plotinian method which leads us from the sensible realm upwards to the One. This upwards trend is what Plotinus calls dialectics.[35]

First, it is clear that contemplation is higher than action. Plotinus starts his treatise with a reference to the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle, and (as Bréhier remarks)[36] the ancient reader must have recalled, that the chapter on the Ethics from which this passage is taken[37] is quite soon followed by a chapter,[38] where contemplation is regarded as the highest good, but where it is at the same time limited to the most divine in the *noû* of human being. The priority of contemplation is still more explicit in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, In Aristotle the term theōría has often the meaning of study or science, a meaning which is secondary in the *Enneads*.[39]

34 10. 5-7.
35 Cf. I. 3, ‘About dialectics’.
36 Notice, 149.
37 X. 1.
38 X. 7.
39 Cf. the first line of Met. α, ‘the study of the truth; *hē perî tês alētheías theōría* and *Met.* 1005 a 29,

The meaning of *theōría* in Plotinus is the same as in Plato. The priority of this contemplation goes back to the Republic, where the well-being of individual and community depends on the contemplation of the eternal being by a small number of elected persons.

In Book Λ of the *Metaphysics*, the celebrated book dealing with the theology of the Stagirite, the Prime Mover leads a life of activity 'such as the best that we can for brief periods enjoy.'[40] 'Its very activity is pleasure (*hēdonḗ*) - just as waking (*egrḗgorsis*), perceiving (*aísthēsis*), thinking (*nóēsis*) are most pleasant (*hḗdiston*) because they are activities.'[41] 'All physical activity being excluded by the immaterial nature of the first mover, Aristotle can only ascribe to it mental activity, and only that kind of mental activity which owes nothing to the body, viz., knowledge; and only that kind of knowledge which does not grasp conclusions by the aid of premisses but is direct, intuitive (*nóēsis*)....'. This knowledge is also called contemplation (*theōría*), 'the pleasantest and best of all things'. But the knowledge of God must be self-knowledge: it is a knowledge which has *only* itself for its object. Ross has convincingly proved that Aristotle's God does not know the world and that the interpretation that he knows the world at least in principle or *en parérgōi*, has to be rejected. This interpretation is due to Thomas Aquinas, who also held that God's knowledge has to be conceived as self-knowledge. 'But,' says he, 'it does not follow that everything different from him is not known to him; for by knowing himself he knows everything else.'[42] This is akin to Śaṅkara's view, where the same difficulty arises on account of the *svayamprakāśatva* of knowledge; 'Moreover you (the Vedāntin) also who assume an all-knowing Brahman can ascribe to it all-knowingness in so far only as that term means capacity for all knowledge. For Brakman cannot always be actually engaged in the cognition of everything.'[43]

40 Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, ed. W.D. Koss I, Introduction cxli, Oxford 1924, also for what follows.
41 See Ross' colispectus II. 373, of *Met.* Λ, 6, 1072 b, 14-18.
42 *Nee tarnen sequitur quod omnia alia a se ei sunt ignota: nam intelligendo se intelliget amnia alia*: in *Met.* 12, 11 ap. Ross, o.c. I, cxlii.
43 *BSB* ad. 1.1.4, in fine.

Plotinos develops in a more consistent manner than Aristotle, the Platonic doctrine of transcendent ideas which form a kosmos *nóētos*. Aristotle emphatically calls God's being an activity, and with him (as also with Plato, as we shall see) *nóēsis* and *theōría* are activities.[44] But when Aristotle specifies this activity with regard to God, it turns out to be a purely interiorised self-knowledge, which cannot even know the world - i.e., in fact an inactivity. Plotinus, who is nearer to Plato, says that if contemplation is 'the pleasantest and the best of things' and so unlike an activity, it must be better than any activity too. Developing this in his own manner he attributes contemplation to all things; but the higher the being, the further is its contemplation removed from activity.

The general trends in Plotinus and Śaṅkara are the same, but the differences are conspicuous too. For Śaṅkara meditation is a lower activity and knowledge is higher than activity. For Plotinus there is a scale of contemplations, the higher the less active, ultimately transcending all activity. The general trend is subordination of activity under contemplation (in Plotinus) and knowledge (in Śaṅkara).

In the above passages of the *Enneads* the concept of knowledge has no separate place as in Śaṅkara, but is another term for the higher forms of contemplation. But in a chapter of the treatise which states that the One does not think,[45] it is clearly expressed that the self-knowledge of the *nous* and its final release are the same. Self-knowledge is only possible because of knowledge of the One: 'Self-knowledge exists only in a being different from the Good (i.e., the One)[46]....knowing the Good, it subsequently knows itself; looking at the Good it knows itself'.[47] Plotinus often speaks about self-knowledge as nearest to the knowledge of the One. But this results from the same idea which led Advaitins to the thesis of the self-luminosity of knowledge: i.e. the tendency to conceive a knowledge which does not presuppose any relationship.

44 Compare for instance the fact that the *theōría* is often regarded by Aristotle as actuality, *epistēmē* as potentiality of knowledge, e.g. *Met* Λ 7 1072, b. 24 (with seven parallel passages, quoted by Ross *ad hoc*).

45 V. 6: What is beyond being does not think.

46 See below III, 3. 184.

47 V. 6. 5. 12-17.

Thus Plotinus says: ‘especially one should not view the One by means of other things.’[48] Similarly Śaṅkara says that one should not see the Absolute in a symbol (*na pratīke*....).

Both the lower forms of contemplation in Plotinus and meditation (*dhyāna*) are productive. When Plotinus says that nature through silent contemplation produces ‘the traces of the (physical) bodies’ we are on the one hand reminded of the creator in the Brāhmaṇas, who ‘thinks silently in his mind: what is in his mind becomes the *sāman* Bṛhat’ (leading later to the equally inactive process of creation of names and forms -‘traces’-in Advaita); while on the other hand we recall dhyāna which mysteriously produces (through *apūrva*) *svarga* and celestial felicity, just as nature produces through *theōría* itself and its own beauty and grace.

Both the higher forms of contemplation in Plotinus and knowledge in Śaṅkara are not productive. Their aim hes in themselves and they reach the perfect unity of subject and object. Thus the highest *theōría* in Plotinus leads to the One, whereas the Advaitic *jñāna* leads to and is identical with Brahman.

For Plotinus we have to go beyond the *nous* in order to reach the One. For Śaṅkara brahmajñāna is not ordinary, discursive knowledge but a direct experience, But is not Brahman for Śaṅkara *cit* which seems to be more or less the same as *nous* and would not be the highest in Plotinus? It is true that Śaṅkara at this important point follows the well-known *śruti*, that Brahman is *saccidānanda*. But his actual interpretation identifies these three qualifications throughout and entirely, in such a way that they disappear in the quality-less Brahman where nothing is left of the unity-in-multiplicity characteristic of the *nous*. Elsewhere Plotinus says that the soul wants to go beyond the nous and cease to think (*noeîin*), because ‘thinking is a movement.’[49] Similarly *saccidānanda* is beyond all movement and cit in this compound is a higher entity than *nous*.

In the treatise on contemplation an increasing plenitude corresponds to the upward movement towards the One. The unity

48 V. 5.10.1.
49 VI. 7.35.2: *tò noeîn kínēsis*.

of the One manifests itself as plenitude in the *nous*. This plenitude, when diversified, manifests itself as harmony, as a 'symphony', as a *sumpátheia tōn hólōn*. But though this plenitude proceeds from the One, the One remains undiminished and unaffected, just as the Absolute is described in the 'peace chant' of the *pūrṇam*: plenitude proceeds from plenitude, but it remains as plenitude.

The most isnteresting parallel in the analysecl treatise is the description of the sage-foreshadowed in Plato and in the Stoa-as a person who finds the One by turning towards himself and finding 'everything inside'. Whoever is familiar with Indian terminology is tempted to translate: who finds the Self by turning inward-another way of expressing the celebrated *tat tvam asi*. For the purpose of comparison with Advaita it is relevant to know whether according to Plotinus the individual soul is actually and always identical with the Absolute, or whether it can find itself identical with it under certain circumstances. It is clear that the soul is for Plotinus a third divine being, which seems *prima facie* different from the first divine being. This first question therefore becomes whether the individual soul is in the last resort, 'in reality', one with the One, or whether it possesses the possibility of becoming One (identifying itself) with the One. Or, more generally formulated, a, second question is, whether the One is the only reality, notwithstanding the three hypostases, or whether there are other realities too. The first question will be considered first.

Are *psukhḗ* and *nous* ultimately the same as the One, or do they merely become the One?-Let us first listen to the divine Plato, whom Plotinus generally follows. Plato conceives of the soul in two ways which are apparently contradictory: in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* the *psukhḗ* is the principle of knowledge and a statical, thinking soul.[50] In the *Phaedrus* and the later dialogues the *psukhḗ* is the principle of life and movement, a dynamical, moving soul.[51] It is defined as: *tò huph'heauton kînoumenon*, 'the self-moving principle of movement'.[52] The only interpreta-

50 J.H.M.M. Loenen, *De NOUS in het systeem van Plato's philosophie*, Amsterdam 1951, 101-102, 107-108.
51 Id. 119-120.
52 *Phaedrus* 245c-e, and frequently until *Laws* 894b.

tion of these two divergent defrnitions seems to be the one suggested by Loenen, i.e. that *nous* is a function of the *psukhḗ* (for which there are other indications) and that *nous* is *kínēsis*, ‘a movement’[53] or *poîein*, ‘an activity’.[54] As mentioned earher the doctrine of *psukhḗ* as movement and activity occurs in Aristotle and in Plotinus. In Plotimis the paradox arises, that this moving thought comes to a standstill in the contemplation of the One, which the soul finds in itself. This implies that the definition of the soul as a self-moving principle of movement is no longer valid for Plotinus (which he apparently never recognises): for it finds in itself *also* the calmness and quiet which is the One, and in that situation it neither moves itself nor anything else. We have to conclude that the soul can assume states of motion, connected with the world of multiplicity, and states of rest and union (*hénōsis*) in the One.

Thus we are led to Bréhier's conclusion[55] that the soul is ‘the power and capacity to travel along all things and to assimilate itself to each of them through a series of transformations’.[56] Accordingly we read in Plotinus: ‘for the soul is many things and all things, the superior and the inferior, and it extends over life vx its entirety.’[57] This is sometimes specified with the help of the Aristotelian pair of concepts actuality (*enérgeia*) and potentiality (*dúnamis*) e.g., with regard to the relation between the individual and universal soul or the individual and universal *nous*. Puech summarizes some passages as follows:[58] ‘Our individual soul is individual in actuality, but the universal soul in potentiality, whereas the universal soul is universal in actuality, but the individual soul in potentiality.[59] Likewise each individual *nous* is individual in actuality, but all *nóoi* the universal *nous*, in potentiality, whereas the universal *nous* is in actuality all the individual *nóoi*

53 *Sophistes* 249a.
54 *Sophistes* 248 e 6-249 b 6.
55 *Philosophie de Plotin*, Chap. V.
56 ‘la puissance de parcourir les choses et de s'assimiler a chacune d'elles par tuie série de transformations’.
57 III. 4.3.21-23.
58 H.-C. Puech, *Position spirituelle et signification de Plotin*. Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé 58 (October 1938) 43.
59 VI. 4.16.

and in potentiality each of them."[60] The process of actualization of the potential is since Aristotle a process of transformation (as will be stressed below) and thus it follows that the Plotinian soul is subject to a kind of *pariṇāmavāda*. But this universal possibility of actualization also throws more light upon the different contemplations about which Plotinus speaks. It actually converges to the idea of *dhyāna* in the Brāhmanas and in Pūrva Mīmāṁsā, where the human soul is capable of identifying itself with everything.

Unlike Śaṅkara, Plotinus does not say that these identifications are 'subjective'; on the contrary, they are the actualizations of existing possibilities. We become what we know, says Plotinus, generalizing Aristotle, who said that the mind in knowing immaterial forms is one with its object.[61] This can in turn be looked upon as a generalization of what the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* taught: 'He who realises Brahman through knowing becomes Brahman'. Śaṅkara interprets this not as becoming, but as the realization of being: he who knows Brahman, knows that he is Brahman. Here we observe again how a similar idea manifests itself in Plotinus as a hierarchy and in Śaṅkara as a well marked differentiation:[62] according to Plotinus knowledge is higher the more completely subject and object are one; according to Śaṅkara subject and object are generally different,[63] but they are one in *brahmavidyā*. The degrees of contemplation and unification of which Plotinus speaks are perhaps phenomenologically given, but logically they are not very clear. The distinctions of Śaṅkara are the result of a superior logic. Though Plotinus generally accepts the phenomena and compromises with them in their phenomenal character, there is also an uncompromising 'transcendentalising' direction in his thought. Śaṅkara on the other hand, in principle strictly logical and uncompromising with the world of *avidyā*, com-

60 VI. 2.20.

61 See W.D. Ross, *Aristotle*, London 1953, 147.

62 That is: the hierarchy of contemplations in Plotinus and the well marked differentiation of *dhyāna* or *upāsana* sas activities and *jñāna* as non-activity in Śaṅkara.

63 See e.g. the opening lines of the *upodghata* of the *BSB*: 'It is a matter not requiring any proof that the object and the subject whose respective spheres are the notion of the "Thou" (the Non-Ego) and the "Ego", and which are opposed to each other as darkness and light are, cannot be identified'.

promises with regard to the *vyāvahārika* realm. Both contrary trends seem to essentially belong to the two systems of thought.

Let us consider an example from both, beginning with the 'contrary' trend in Śaṅkara. It has been pointed out above (and more extensively by Bhattacharyya) how Brakman gives its reality to the *vyāvahārika* realm by means of its *śakti*. Sanskrit *śakti* seems to denote the same idea as Greek *dúnamis* (in the pre-Aristotelian, pre-technical sense). And thus there is accordance when Plotinus characterizes not only the soul as *dúnamis*, but also calls (as we saw above) the One *dúnamis pántōn*, 'power, potency of everything.' Here *dúnamis* has the same meaning as *śakti* and does not yet have the technical meaning of 'potentiality'. Aristotle would never call his Prime Mover a *dúnamis*; it is an actuality, *enérgeia*. This is due to the fact, that for Aristotle actuality is always prior to potentiality; he proves this with several arguments,[64] e.g. on account of the actual force which is needed when something potential becomes actual Plotinus fully accepts this priority,[65] and this may seem inconsistent when he calls the One *dúnamis pántōn*. But it only shows that the latter denomination does not mean that the One is a potentiality, but that everything is potentially contained in it. The One is the potency of everything, because everything originates from it.[66]

The other 'contrary' trend will here be considered with regard to the highest state of the soul, where it is one with the One. This is the *samdāhi* which Plotinus experiences and which he called *ékstasis* in a descriptive passage. Here he speaks about 'a vision (*théama*), but a different kind of seeing, an ecstasy (*ékstasis*), a simplification (*háplōsis*s), an abandonment of oneself (*epídosis hautoû*), a desire for immediate contact, a standstill (*stásis*)....'[67] It is well known that Porphyry has recorded that Plotinus had this vision four times, *tetrákis*, but it is generally for gotten that this was during five years only, for Porphyry adds: 'during the time that I was with him',[68] which must have been

64 *Met.* 1049 b. 4-1051a. 2.
65 See e.g. VI. 26. 1-3: 'The most absurd is...not to give preference to actuality above, potentiality'.
66 This recurs with Guénon.
67 VI. 9.11. 22-24.
68 *Vita Plotini* 23. 16-17,

from 263 until 268 A.D. (two years before Plotinus' death in 270). P. Henry has rightly emphazised this.[69] Throughout his life Plotinus may have had this experience more frequently, and he speaks in fact about the occurrence of his own awakening[70] as a phenomenon which took place *pollákis* 'often'-not *tetrákis*s. Bréhier[71] and Dodds[72] rightly remark that this experience cannot be regarded as the starting point of the metaphysics of Plotinus, as its interpretation is independent from the experience itself.[73]

That we are entitled to speak in this context about a 'contrary trend' (to the general world-affirmative outlook of Plotinus' writings) follows from the fact that in the hierarchy of states of the soul this state is evidently evaluated most highly as the 'goal'. Although Plotinus does not deny the other realities which are accessible to the ever transforming and assimilating soul, this state is not a transformation and is undoubtedly the most significant. In addition Plotinus often describes the contemplative state in negative terms as a withdrawal from the world-in a similar marnier as Advaitins define the concentration of *dhyāna* and *upāsanā*. He speaks in the above passage of a *epídosis Kautoû*, 'an abandonment of oneself', and in the above discussed section on the *theōría* of the *nous* it is said that the nous reaches the One by as it were abandoning itself.[74] Elsewhere, he says with reference to the One: 'If you pronounce its name and think about it, leave everything else (*tà álla pánta áphes*); leaving thus everything, abandon even the word: It'.[75] Plotinus gives a short characterization of his own ideas in the words: *áphele pánta*, 'leave everything behind'. All these passages point strongly in the direction of world-negation.[76]

69 *Plotinus weer in de mode*. Studiën (1937) 245-255.
70 *egeirómenos*. See the beginning of IV 8.
71 *Philosophie de Plotin* 160.
72 E.R. Dodds, *The Parmenides and the Neoplatonic One*, Classical Quarterly 22 (1938) 129-143: 140-141.
73 Cf. above II, 15.
74 III. 8.9.30: *hoîon heantôn aphénta*.
75 VI. 8.21. 26-27.
76 Cf. Plotinus neglect of his own body (*Vita Plotini* 1 and the beginning of 2), which shows more asceticism than his philosophical statements generally express. Cf. P.V. Pistorius, *Plotinus and Neoplatonism*, Cambridge 1952, 141,

But there is more. Though Plotinus is nowhere entirely explicit, there is good reason to follow the opinion of Bréhier who says: ‘The fact that ecstasy rarely manifests itself in the soul tied to the body, exceptionally and momentarily, does not exclude its being the normal and necessary state of the soul and of the *nous*’.[77] This implies that unification with the One is the normal and necessary state, in other words: the One is real being. Moreover, that the One is always the underlying reality, and its occurrence not simply due to a transformation of the soul, is evident from a passage where Plotinus corrects himself in his own usage of language, which is generally under the influence of a *pariṇāma*-like mode of thinking: ‘When the soul happens to go to the principle, or, better (*mâllon*), when the latter's presence manifests itself (*parón phanēi*)....’[78]

Summarising it can be said that there is in the *Enneads*, despite the positive characterization of life and contemplation even in the lower stages, and despite the description of ordered beauty of the cosmos,[79] a contrary trend of withdrawal from this world and of search for a reality which is more real and more true.[80]

3. *Infinity and being*

Is there anything in Neoplatonism which corresponds to the distinction between *nirguṇa*- and *saguṇa-brahman*? The only similar distinction is that between the first and the second hypothesis, i.e., between the One and the *nous*. Similarly, though not in exactly the same way, the One is unqualified and the *nous* is qualified.

The One is even called ‘beyond being‘, *epékeina óntos, ousías*,[81] (as will be seen below), which certainly imphes that it

77 Philosophie de Plotin 166; ‘La forme rare, exceptionnelle, momentanée sous laquelle il se presente dans l'âme liée au corps n'empêche qu'il est l'état normal et nécessaire de l'âme et de l'intelligence’.

78 VI. 7.34. 8-9.

79 Cf. below III. 6: and especially *Enn.* I. 6: ‘About the beautiful’.

80 Plotinus even comes close to the term non-dualism, *a-dvaita*; ‘The name ‘One’ denotes nothing but a negation of multiplicity (*tà pollá*). Therefore the Pythagoreans referred to it amongst themselves in a symbolical way as A-pollon, i.e. negation of multiplicity’ (V. 5.6.26-28).

81 *Passim*; e.g. V. 5.6. 8-13; *epékeina ousías* (taken from Plato's *Republic* 509 b) in V. 1.8. 7-8; 4.1. 9-10; VI. 7.40.26, etc.

is beyond all qualifications. It is beyond qualifying or qualified thinking since it is beyond the *nous*: *epékeina noû*,[82] *kreîtton noû*, 'better than the *nous*'[83] *prò noû* 'prior to the *nous*'[84] etc. Likewise it is devoid of a number of other specifications and hence an adequate denotation of *neti, neti*: it is ineffable, *árrētos;*;[85] immutable, *akinḗtos; ménōn*;[86] without any want or desire, *anendeés*;[87] indivisable, *améristos*;[88] *adiéstatos*;[89] formless, *aneídeos*;[90] infinite, *ápeiros*;[91] etc. In short Plotinus says: 'Nothing can be affirmed of the One, which is suitable to it',[92] as 'it is even for itself nothing'.[93]

These negations were introduced by Pseudo-Dionysius Areo-pagita[94] into the Christian and Muslim middle ages and led to Negative Theology. The negation can be traced far back beyond Plotinus to the *Parmenides* of Plato and to the poem of the historical Parmenides, as R. Klibansky has shown.[95] The philosophical reason for negation is given by Proclus in his commentary on the *Parmenides* (in Plotinus this is unexpressed but understood), summarised by Bréhier as follows: 'Affirmation indicates a limitation, whereas negation signifies an indefinite possibility. The domain of 'not-man' is much vaster than that of 'man'.[96] This leads to Spinoza's famous '*omnis determinatio est negatio*'.

82 V. 1.8.7; V. 4.2.3; III, 8.9.9-10.
83 V. 3.16.38.
84 V. 3.11.20.
85 V. 3.10.42; V. 3.13.1; Cf. VI. 9.4. 11-12.
86 V. 1.6.25 sq., Cf. I. 7.1.15, etc.
87 I. 8.2.4; III. 8.11.41; V. 6.4.1; VI. 9.6.15; Cf. VI. 7.23.8.
88 IV. 1.1.12.
89 VI. 8.17.21.
90 V. 5.6.4; VI. 7.32.9; etc.
91 VI. 9.6.10; etc.
92 VI. 7.41.38.
93 *Ibid*., 27.
94 In his works *Mystica Theologia* and *De divinis Nominibus*.
95 *The continuity of the Platonic tradition during the middle ages*, London 1939, 25. The author supposes that Dionysius must have known to the *Parmenides* of Plato, because he disregards the link which the *Enneads* provide (compare with the passages he quotes VI. 7.41. 37-38; V. 3.13.4; VI. 8.18.53; V. 3.10.42; V. 3.13.1; VI. 9.5.32).
96 Proclus, *In Parmenidem*, 1074 ap. E. Bréhier, *L'idée de nêant et le problème de l'origine radicale dans le néoplatonisme grec*, Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale 26 (1919) 443-476; 459.

This is related to another topic. The One is called infinite, *ápeiron*. This is thus specified: ‘It is not finite; by what could it be limited? But neither is it infinite in size; where could it have need to proceed? .... But its *dúnamis* possesses infinity’.[97] ‘It possesses infinity, because it is not a multiplicity and because there is nothing to limit it’.[98] And elsewhere: ‘It has to be admitted that its infinity does not consist in lack of completion in size or number, but in lack of limitation in *dúnamis*’[99] In other words, the One is not actual infinite but potential infinite. This is quite different from Śaṅkara, according to whom *ananta* means infinity in space, in time and *in substance*, i.e., actual infinity.

That Plotinus hesitates to attribute actual infinity to the One merely underlines that he was a Greek philosopher. The Greeks abhorred nothing as much as the infinite, indefinite, undetermined, indistinct, formless and unlimited. To the Greeks absolute negation, matter and non-being are *ápeiron*. This goes back to Pythagoras or the Pythagoreans, who recognised ten pairs of opposites in which the first of each pair was always good and positive and the second bad and negative. This list opens with the pair: (*péras-ápeiron*) ‘limit-unlimited’.[100] In Plato the ideas are ‘forms’ (the appropriate translation of *eídos*), i.e., determinations and limitations. in the *Philebus* an attempt is made to explain the universe with the aid of four principles. The active and positive principle is again *péras* and the inert and matter-like one *ápeiron*. In Plato's unwritten doctrines, the *ágrapha*, recorded by Aristotle and by others, all numbers presuppose the same elements: the One (taking the place of *péras*) and ‘the great and small’ (taking the place of the *ápeiron*).[101] The latter entity is also called ‘the indefinite dyad’ and is explained by Aristotle in the following words: ‘Plato made the indeterminable dual, because they are supposed to exceed all limits (cf. the ápeiron) and to proceed *ad infinitum* in the direction both of increase and of reduction’.[102] A similar account is given by a Platonist of the first genera-

97 V. 5.10. 18-12. Cf. VI. 9.6. 7-8.
98 V. 5.11. 1-2.
99 VI. 9.6. 10-12.
100 Met. A. 5,986 a 23.
101 See Ross, *Plato's theory of ideas*, 184 sq., also for what follows.
102 *Physics* 206 b. 27.

tion, Hermodorus, quoted in Simplicius' commentary on the *Physics*. According to Sextus Empiricus, 'the One and the in-definite dyad emerged as the supreme principles of all things'.[103]

With Aristotle 'matter', *húlē*, is mainly described as *ápeiron*. Similarly in Plotinus 'matter' 'or 'non-being' is *tò ápeiron* (see below). For these reasons (for which there is abundant evidence) the One cannot be conceived as actually infinite. But the same reasons also give support to the opinion, that for Plotinus not only the One exists, as for Śaṅkara, but also other and lower realities.

By calling the One *aneídeos*, 'formless', Plotinus seems to withdraw further from the Greek heritage, due to the following arguments: 'The essence (*ousía*), born from the One, is form (*eídos*); not a particular form, but the universal form, leaving oustide itself no other form. Thus necessarily the One (which is beyond essence: *epékeina ousías*) is formless'.[104] Elsewhere Plotinus makes a concession and discloses his Greek background: 'The principle (*arkhḗ*, i.e. the One) is formless; not that it lacks form (*ou tò morphēs deoménon*), but in the sense that every intellectual form comes from it'.[105]

The Greek preference for what is limited continues to live in Western culture. It can be traced everywhere and can be easily exemplified, e.g. in Goethe's saying 'It is by limiting himself that a master shows his mastership'.[106] Alongside this monistic mystics and metaphysicians stressed under Neoplatonic or Christian influence the infinity of the Divine. In Christianity, especially in Protestantism, God's infinity does not signify that he is the only reality; it is moreover potential rather than actual. That actual infinity does not exist is a recurrent thesis of Western philosophy (defended even in modern intuitionistic mathematics). Regarding the temporal aspect, the Christian God is eternal, but he creates once and manifests himself at special times (*kairós*). Likewise he is not infinite in space, nor omnipresent. An important modern theologian and phenomenologist of religion, Rudolf Otto, says: 'This doctrine of the 'omnipresence' of God, as if he had to be at each

103 See *Adv. math.* 10.258-280.
104 V. 5.6. 1-5.
105 VI. 7.32. 9-10.
106 'In der Beschränkung zeigt sich der Meister'.

place and at all time because of a necessity of his nature, as a natural force in space, is a barren invention of speculative metaphysics, of which scripture knows nothing. Scripture does not know of 'omnipresence', neither of the expression, nor of the thing; but it knows the God, who is where he wants to be and is not where he does not want to be-the Deus mobilis....'.[107]

In Advaita, Brahman is all-pervading and omnipresent: *sarvagata, vibhu*. It has to be so since Brahman is the only reality. In the *Enneads* two treatises which go under the same title: 'That what is one and identical can be at the same time omnipresent (*pantakhoû*, everywhere)'.[108] Plotimus follows in the beginning of these a discussion in Plato's *Parmenides*, where the same thesis is forwarded and where it is shown how there is no contradiction between unity and omnipresence. With regard to time Plotinus also agrees with Śaṅkara and opposes Christianity. Neoplatonism and Advaita believe in eternal cyclical time and do not recognize (as we will see below) creation in the ordinary sense. J. Guitton, who especially dealt with this question,[109] comes to the conclusion that in Neoplatonism time is not real and the real is intemporal.[110] Thus formulated this doctrine supports the secondary 'Advaitic' trend in Plotinus' thought. In terms of the hierarchy there is reality at a lower level than that of eternal being.

Though there is no Neoplatonic parallel to the *cit* of *saccidānanda*, since the One is beyond the *nous*, also in Śaṅkara's inter-

107 R. Otto, *Aufsätze das Numinose betreffend*, Gotha 1923, 175: 'diese Lehre von der Allgegenwart Gottes, als ob er von Not seiner Natur zu allem Ort und aller Zeit sein müsse, wie einer Naturkraft im Raume, ist ein frostiges Fündlein spelculierender Metaphysik, von der die Schrif nichts weiss. Sie kennt keine 'Allgegenwart', weder dem Ausdruck, noch die Sache, sondern sie kennt den Gott, der da ist, wo er sein will und da nicht, wo er nicht sein will, den Deus mobilis....'

108 VI. 4 and 5.

109 J. Guitton, *Le temps et l'éternité chez Plotin et St. Augustin*, Paris 1933. Cf. H.C. Puech, *Temps, histoire et mythe dans le christianisme des premiers siècles*. Proc. VIIth Congr. for the History of Religions, Amsterdam 1951, 33-52; and the author's *Over het cyclische en het rechtlijnige tfjdsbegrip*.

110 'Il tempo non e reale. Il reale e intemporale' summarizes B. Marien, *Bibliographia critica degli studi plotiniani con rassegna delle lore recenzioni*, riveduta e curata da V. Cilento, Bari 1949, 144.

pretation *cit* loses the characteristics of *nous*. What can be said with regard to *sat* and *ānanda*? Starting with the latter, Plotinus often calls the One the Good (*tàgathón*) and declares that both are exactly the same: 'When we say the One and when we say the Good we must think about the same nature and we must affirm it as one".[111] Once it is further specified, that 'the One is not a good for itself but for the other things'[112] it follows that the One is the highest Good and for that reason the most desirable goal for mankind (which the abstract philosophical One need not be) just like the felicity of *ānanda*, bliss. Plotinus carefully elucidates-and Śaṅkara would agree with him-that this does not signify that the One *is* good in the ordinary moral sense: *tàgathón* is not good,[113] it is super-good.[114] Its being the Good is different from the goodness which the soul may possess.[115] Or it is said: 'Because it is prior to all beings, we call it the Good'.[116] Plotinus has taken the term *tàgathón* from Plato (especially the *Republic*), just as *tò hén* is probably taken from the dialogue *Parmenides* interpreted in a Neoplatonic, 'hypostasing' sense. The term *tò hén* must also have played an important part in Plato's unwritten doctrines, which deal extensively with the 'ideal numbers'. Also Plotinus' equation of the One and the Good may go back to Plato, for the latter seems to have identified both in his lectures on the Good, of which we possess only some records by others. Aristoxenus, in describing these lectures, used the phrase *kaì tò péras hóti agathòn éstin hén*[117] translated by Ross as: 'and the lecture culminated in the statement that there is one Good'.[118] 'But', adds Ross, 'it is equally possible .... that what Plato main-

111 II. 9.1. 5-6: 'Phrase qui fut écrite longtemps aprés que fut composé et, sans doute, intitulé le traité VI, 9, mais que Plotin, peut avoir prononcée de vive voix longtemps avant de l'écrire': P. Henry, *Les états du texte de Plotin*, Paris 1938, 28. See the title of VI, 9: 'About the Good or the One'.

112 VI. 7.41.29. Cf. Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita's distinction: 'Par rapport a la creation...Dieu est le Bien; par rapport à lui-même, le nom emprunté aux creatures qui. lui convienne le moins mal est celui d'Etre' (E. Gilson, *La philosophie au moyen-âge*, Paris 1947, 83).

113 V. 5.13. 1-6.

114 VI. 9.6.40; *huperagathón*.

115 I. 7.1.

116 VI. 7.24. 6-7; Cf. also VI. 9.6. 55-57; V. 3.11. 25-26.

117 *Harm*. II. 30.

118 *Theory of ideas* 244.

tained was that the One is good-the doctrine which Aristotle in two passages attributes to him. We do not know and it would be fruitless to guess.'

One of the most characteristic doctrines of Plotinus is that the One is not being, *sat*. It is often mentioned that the One is *epékeina óntos*, 'beyond being'. This is elucidated as follows: 'If everything is contained in what has come into being, with which of these beings could one designate the One? As it is none of those things, we can only say that it is beyond them. These things, however, are the beings and being; the One is therefore beyond being'.[119] This signifies only that it is not 'something definite' (*to toûto*).[120] In other words, that the One is beyond being means that it is not qualified and individualised in a particular being; it is not a '*Seiendes*'-in the German terminology. *Ón* in Plotinus does not denote being in general, *sat*, but denotes qualified being and each particular, individual being. It does not denote the kind of being of a being, being qua being, *ón ȅi ón*, as in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*[121] or as *Sein* in German thought. *Ón* belongs to the second hypostasis, to the realm of the nous. Both are explicitly equated: 'The *nous* and the *ón* are the real and first world'.[122] 'Both are one'.[123] Elsewhere the *nous* is called the law of being.[124] In short *tò ón* denotes definite, qualified being, and *nous* represents its definiteness and intelligibility. The reason for this is the same as the reason for the fact that the One in unintelligible: for Plotinus *being is always intelligible* (as for the Scholastics the intelligibility of being will be the main assumption). But then we are entitled to compare the duality *sagunanirguṇa* with that of *nous*-One, for *nous* is qualified and intelligible being. There is no contradiction between Śaṅkara's affirmation that Brahman is *sat* 'the plenitude of unqualified being', and Plotinus' thesis that the One is beyond *ón*, i.e., beyond qualified and intelligible being.

Despite the fact that this Plotinian expression is consistent with his system, it is somewhat misleading since we should not

119 V. 5.6. 8-13.
120 *Ibid.*, 13.
121 See, however, below; Appendix 249.
122 III. 2.1. 26-28.
123 V. 9.8.16: *tà ámphō hén*, Cf, V. 9.8.11 and Bréhier, p. 164 note.
124 V. 9.5. 28-29.

think that the One is a non-entity, a blank, a *śūnya*. The *śūnyavādins* had to undergo the same interpretation. Even excellent interpreters of Plotinus' thought have been startled by this doctrine, e.g. Arnou, who is of the opinion that 'Plotinus ought to have admitted the identification of the One and of being'.[125] Such a judgment evidently results from the Christian identification of being and God which the medieval philosophers saw expressed in the biblical: 'I am that I am'.[126]

Also this expression of Plotinus has its roots in the Corpus Platonicum: *the epékeina ousías* of the *Republic* has been mentioned already. Also the difficulties of the dialogue *Parmenides* can be interpreted in such a way that the highest entity is beyond being; this was done by the Neoplatonists and also by some modern scholars.[127] One of the successors of Plato in the Academy, Speusippus, and some Neopythagoreans called the supreme principle *huperoúsion*, 'the supra-essential' or *anoúsion*, 'the non-essential'.[128] Also one of the Gnostics, Basilides, conceived of a divine non-being.[129]

These expressions result from a desire to protect the transcendent. One against all earthly impurities. The same applies to the attitude with regard to concepts like principle and cause, which Śaṅkara relegated to the *vyāvahārika* realm. Plotinus sometimes calls the One *hḕ arkhḗ*, 'the principle'.[130] Elsewhere he hesitates to apply this concept, which presupposes the notion of relationship: 'It is the principle of all things; and still, in another way, it is not a principle'.[131] The Neoplatonist Damascius held for the same reason that we have to assume above the One the 'Ineffable', 'of which it can not even be affirmed that it is a principle'.[132]

125 R. Arnou *Le désir de Dieu danṣ la philosophie de Plotin*, Paris 1921, 137. 'Plotin eût du admettre cette identification de l'un et de l'Etre'.
126 Exodus 3 : 14.
127 H. Wundt; J. Wahl.
128 See Dodds, o.c. 138-140; Merlan, o.c. 117.
129 See Gilson o.c. 36; cf. W.R. Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus* I, London-New York-Toronto 1929, 107 n. 1.
130 Passages enumerated in Arnou, o.c. 131, 158.
131 VI 8:8. 8-9.
132 Damascius, *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis* Ed. Ruelle, Paris 1889, I. 10.22 ap. Bréhier; *L'idée de néant*, 471.

Śaṅkara refuses to call Brahman a cause, as this concept belongs inherently to the *vyavahāara* or *pariṇāma* realm. Brahman can be called that, from which the origination, subsistence and dissolution of this world proceed-according to the taṭastha definition at least. In Plotinus the same idea is expressed in au entirely different way: 'When we call the One cause (*aítion*), this does not mean that we attribute anything to it, but that we qualify ourselves with an attribute; we receive from it, but it remains in itself'.[133] Elsewhere the One is called *aítion toû aítiou*,[134] which might be translated as 'cause of causation', i,e., an entity beyond the realm of causation.[135].

Resuming, we are entitled to speak also in Plotinus' case about a highest *nirguṇa* One and a lower *saguṇa* being or *nous*. Is the second entity ultimately, as in Śaṅkara, unreal, or only real in so far as identical with the One? And does this hold for the third hypothesis, the soul, and for *húlē*, 'matter'[136] too? In order to solve this central problem the architecture of the hypostases may first be considered in general.[137]

The origination of the second hypostasis from the first, or of multiplicity from unity, rightly called by Merlan 'the most fundamental difficulty characteristic of what is called Neoplatonism',[138] is dealt with by Plotinus mainly in images, as logic seems to fail here. In these passages the central difficulty for Plotinus is not that something different from the One can come into an apparent kind of being, but that something different from it can actually

133 VI. 9.3.49-51.

134 VI. 8.18.38.

135 In the Arabic translation of portions of the *Enneads* (the well known '*Theology of Aristotle*' and a '*Letter on the divine wisdom*' recently discovered by P. Kraus) this expression occurs and the editor assumed that it was due to the influence of the Christian translator (a Syrian Jacobite). But the attributes 'cause', 'first cause' and 'cause of cause (s)' occur in the Enneads and are not 'assez étrangères è la pensée plotinienne' (P. Kraus, *Plotin chez les Arabes*, Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte XXIII, Le Caire 1941, 293).-This is significant as it shows that apparently theistic attributes of the One can be found in Plotinus, but that the general atmosphere of his thought is such that one does not expect them.

136 See however, below III 4: 191.

137 Cf. Bréhier, *Philosophie de Plotin*, Chap. IV.

138 o.c. 1.

come into being without affecting the One. ‘It has to be said that whatever comes from the One, comes from it without any movement’.[139] When the *nous* comes into being the reality of duality is presupposed, e.g.,: ‘each produced being desires its producer and loves it, especially when the producer and the produced are alone’.[140] Elsewhere Plotinus derives conclusions from the following hypothesis: ‘If something exists after the first thing....’.[141] In another context he says about thinking: ‘that it came into being because the Good made it exist’,[142] etc. All these passages show that what comes from the One is itself real. The reason given is that nothing is separate from the One (cf. Rāmānuja's *apṛthaksiddhi*)[143] though nothing is identical with it either: ‘Nothing is distant or separated from what is prior to it’.[144] Elsewhere; ‘Nothing is separated, which originates from the One, but nothing is identical with it either’.[145]

4. *Knowledge. The húlē*

Plotinus describes self-knowledge as the entity nearest to knowledge of the One. We know the Principle by knowing ourselves. This can be regarded as the ultimate consequence in Greek philosophy from the ancient saying *Gnōthi seautón*, ‘Know thyself’. But can we, as with Śaṅkara, reverse this and are we in a general situation of *avidyā* when ignoring the One?

Plato, consulted in this matter, provides the thesis, closely related to the theory of ideas, that knowing is a remembering, *ánamnḗsis*.[146] Conversely the soul has come ‘in’ the body due to a fall which is the result of its forgetfulness. Plotinus thinks in the same perspective of thought when he says: ‘How is it that the souls have forgotten their divine father .... and that they ignore

139 V. 1-6. 22-23.
140 *Ibid.* 50-52.
141 V. 4.1.1.
142 V. 6.5.6-7.
143 See e.g. Dasgupta, *A history of Indian philosophy* III. 299.
144 V. 2.1.21-22.
145 V. 3.12.45-46 .... *oude* .... *aūtòn. hautōi.*
146 Equated, all too uncritically, by Coomaraswamy (*Recollection: Indian and Platonic*) with the Indian *smṛti, smara.*

themselves as well as him?[147] ‘Having arrived at the most distant spot, they ignore even that they themselves are from there’.[148] Elsewhere he says that release (*lúesthai* ‘to be released’) of the soul takes place when it contemplates (*theâsthai*) beings having started with remembrance (*ex anamnḗseōs*).[149]

In Plotinus' century and probably earlier (since the first centuries before Christ) parallels with Advaitic doctrines existed in the *Corpus Hermeticum*. This influenced, if not Neoplatonism itself, certain mystical and ‘esoteric’ movements in late Antiquity, in the middle ages and even later. The *Corpus Hermeticum* is as Festugière has shown, for the greater part a popularized and syncretistic mixture of Plato, Aristotle and their disciples, not a spiritual tradition of ancient origin. These writings contain statements which are quite ‘Advaitic’, e.g.: *kakía dè psukhēs agnōsia*, ‘the evil of the soul is nescience’[150] and *toúnantíon dè aretḗ psukhēs gnōsis*, ‘conversely the virtue of the soul is knowledge’.[151]

According to Plotinus the *noûs* and the *psukhḗ* derive from the One and become themselves distinct but unseparated realities.[152] When we ask how the *nous* comes into being from the One, Plotinus answers: through a principle called *heterótēs*, ‘difference’. The same principle is also responsible for the origination of the *húlē*. Plotinus describes the origination of the *húlē* from the One in an early[153] treatise as follows: *heterótēs*, ‘otherness: difference; novelty’ (one of the category-like *mégista génē*, ‘greatest genera’ from the *Sophistes*),[154] ‘makes’ (*poîei*)[155] the *húlē*. Likewise, the *nous* comes into being through some kind of interaction between the One and *heterótēs*, for ‘otherness (is

147 V. 1.1.1-3: *agnoēsai kaì heautàs kaì ekeînon.*
148 *Ibid.* 7-8.
149 IV. 8.4.29-30.
150 *Corpus Hermeticum* ed. A.D. Nock, transl. A.J. Festugière París, 1945, X. 8.6 (117.4).
151 *Ibid.* X. 9.1 (117.10).
152 Hegel would say: ungeschieden-unterschieden.
153 We know the relative chronology of Plotinus' treatises because of Porphyry's biography. Plotinus wrote in later life and most authors agree that it makes little sense to distinguish between an earlier and a latter period.
154 255. c.
155 II. 4.5.29.

needed) if there can be a distinction between the thinking (*nooûn*) and the thought (*noouménon*)'.[156] This is in accordance with the fact that another entity in the realm of *nous*, the second hypostasis,[157] is called *húlē theîa* 'divine matter'[158] or *húlē noētḗ*, 'intelligible matter'.[159]

The question arises as to which relation exists between the *húlē* and the *húlē noētḗ*. One might be inclined to assume that the same principle-*heterótēs*-through which the *nous* has come into being and which is a purely intelligible principle, does confer some degree of reality to the *húlē*. There can be no doubt about the reality of the *heterótēs*. It is one of the 'categories of being', i.e., it is as fundamental as being itself and it is 'given' together with being. The question which naturally arises is whether the *húlē* is real or not. If the *húlē* is unreal, it has come into 'being' through some kind of interaction between two perfectly real entities.

Plotinus repeatedly asserts that the *húlē* is unreal: it is a *mḕ ón*, 'non-being.' He explains this for instance as follows, speaking about our own being: 'Leave the thus-ness of saying: 'I am thus,' and you become the all; for also previously you were the all' (note, as in the Upaniṣads, the superimposition: 'I am thus'). 'But in as far as you were something different and extra beyond the all, you became, though it is due to a surplus, less: for this surplus is not due to being (nothing could be added to it), but to non-being. You have become 'somebody' because of non-being: you are the universal entity, when you abandon this non-being.'[160] if

156 V. 1.4.37.
157 II. 4.1-5.
158 II. 4.5.15.
159 *Ibid.* 24; *húlē noēté* is a term from Aristotle, denoting spatial extension (*Met* 3. 1936 a 9; a 4; K 1059 b 15). Cf. also Merlan o.c. 113-Plotinus' problem is the same as the Platonic problem in the *Philebus*. (cf. also *Parmenides* 144 esq.), i.e., whether the innnite occurs in the forms.
160 VI. 5.12.18-23 Cf. what some Muslim mystics said (who were influenced by Neoplatonic ideas, as H.S. Nyberg has shown with reference to Ibn 'Arabi): Man (*Adam*) comes from non-being (*'adam*). Cf. also a proverb from Mecca mentioned by C. Snouck Hurgronje (*Mekkanische Sprichwörter und Redensarten*, Haag 1886, 61), which can be interpreted philosophically (in which case there might have been Platonic influence: Plato was in the early middle ages better known to Muslims than to Christians): *sumiya al-insān min an-nisjān*, 'man (*insān*) comes from forgetting (*nisjān*)'.

non-being is the same as *māyā* or *avidyā* (and the term itself points in that direction), Śaṅkara would subscribe to every word of this passage.

Elsewhere a like passage occurs, where non-being is replaced by *húlē* (this is roughly the same as Sanskrit *prakṛti*): The *húlē* is for the soul the cause of its weakness and vice. The *húlē* is therefore bad and it is the first evil (principle). Being under influence of the *húlē* the soul has produced becoming; through its association with it it has become bad: *húlē* is the cause. The soul would not be engaged in becoming, but in being, if not because of the *húlē*'[161]

From these passages one is tempted to conclude that *psukhḗ* is not merely derived from the second hypostasis, *nous* or being-as is generally said-but is the product of both the *nous* and the *húlē*, or of *ón* and of *mḕ ón*. Existing ontologically through being and non-being is the same as both participating and not participating in being. The second clause in both expressions seems to be meaningless if non-being means actually non-being, i.e., if the *húlē* actually *is not*. Thus there are two possibilities: (1) either the *húlē is not*, and then the problem has to be envisaged, how it is possible (and feasible) to speak about something which is not; (2) or the *húlē* in some way, even in a very 'feeble' way, *is*. In the latter case again there are two possibilities: (a) either the *húlē* exists, independently of the three hypostases, or at any rate of the third, but originating from the One; or (b) the *húlē* is entirely independent from everything, with which supposition we are in dualism. These difficulties are akin to the problems of Advaita, especially manifest amongst some later Advaitins, and in both cases the danger of dualism hangs above the systems as a sword of Damocles.

That Plotinus wants to avoid dualism is clear from the fact that he combats this doctrine in the Gnostics.[162] The only remain-

161 I. 8.14.49-54.

162 II. 9. 12. 39 sq.-In: C.J. de Vogel, *Het monisme van Plotinus* Alg. Ned. Tijdschr. v. Wijsb. en Psych. 49 (1956) 99-1123 esp. 107 sq. it is rightly said: 'verstaat men onder dualisme: een wereldverklaring uit twee beginselen, die zelfstandig en gelijkwaardig naast en tegenover elkaar staan, dan was Plotinus geen dualist'.

ing possibility is that the *húlē* originates from the One. In order to understand this the concept of *húlē* has to be analysed more closely. Though it has become customary to translate *húlē* as 'matter', this is misleading since *húlē* denotes an entirely different entity from what we would call matter, be it in daily life or in physics. For Plotinus *húlē* is immaterial *asōmatos*.[163] The same holds for the Platonic and Aristotelian concept of *húlē*, which can sometimes be interpreted as 'empty space', as well as for the medieval *materia*.

The *húlē* is described in many ways. It is one of the theses of Plotinus that it is the same as evil, *kakón*. It is *stérēsis*, 'privation',[164], *pseûdos*, 'a lie' and *eídōlon*, 'a phantom'.[165] For these reasons Puech, a very reliable interpreter of Plotinus' thought who is certainly not under the influence of 'Indianizing' interpretations, uses the terms 'magical' and 'illusion' to characterise the Plotinian third hypostasis. This is related to the magical character of *sumpàtheia tōn hólōn* (manifest for instance in the influence of prayers). Puech says: 'This sensible world is therefore mere illusion. And magical illusion in the true sense of the term'.[166] The *húlē* is unqualified and resembles in this respect the One (see below): it is indivisible, infinite, undetermined, invisible, inactive, etc.[167] In short it is non-being.[168] Plotinus introduces an imaginary opponent, a *pūrvapakṣin* who is shocked by this: 'What? But if it is non-being then nothing would subsist!' But Plotinus does not hesitate to draw this conclusion: 'Not more (would anything subsist) than the image subsists when the mirror is no longer there.... the image is in something else and disappears necessarily when that disappears.'[169] The conrparison with the mirror is only partly valid. If the images disappear the mirror remains, 'because it is a form'; but the *húlē* would not subsist without beings, as it is not even a form.[170] All these passages seem to lead to the con-

163 II. 4.9.4; II. 7.2.30; III. 6.1.4,
164 I. 8.1.19 etc.
165 e.g. II. 5.5.22-23; III. 6.7.
166 Puech, *Position spirituelle*....38: 'Ce monde sensible n'est donc qu'illusion. Et illusion *magique* au vrai sens du terme'.
167 See e.g. III. 6.12-18; and Bréhier's Index s.v. 'Matière'.
168 II. 4.16; 5.4-5; III. 6.7.
169 III. 6.14.1-4.
170 III. 6.13.38-40.

clusion that the *húlē* is indeed non-being, i.e., is not. We have to infer that only the three divine hypostases subsast.

But there are other passages too. Śaṅkara avoids dualism by assuming that the *āśraya* 'locus' of *adhyāsa* can only be Brahman, Plotinus does the opposite: what is more or less the Greek counterpart of *āśraya, tò hupokeímenon*, 'the underlying', the *subjectum*, is the same as the *húlē*: 'All who have dealt with the matter agree that the *húlē* is a *hupokeímenon* and *hupodokhḗ* 'receptacle', for the forms.'[171] And there is more: Plotinus devotes several chapters to a proof that evil, which is the same as *húlē*, actually exists.[172] In one of these chapters we find an important observation concerning the term *mḕ ón*: '*mḕ ón* does not mean absolute non-being. It only denotes what is other than being. Moreover, I mean with 'other' not the way in which movement and rest in a being are 'other' than that being; but the way in which the image of a being is 'other' than that being.'[173] In that case that the *húlē* is *mḕ ón* does not mean that it is not, but merely that it is different from the *ón* of the second hypostasis. This also follows immediately from a previous conclusion, i.e., that *ón* means qualified being. For *mḕ ón* means accordingly unqualified being (similar to 'Seiendes') and nobody would deny that the *húlē* is unqualified being. In other words, the *húlē* is real, though of course a 'lower' entity, and Neoplatonism is in this ré́spect essentially different from Advaita.

Since two different modes of approach and two different sets of images and descriptions occur, we must conclude that there are in Plotinus two incompatible trends which blur the centre of his system. As the second and un-Advaitic trend clearly prevails the more Advaitic tendency is a 'contrary tendency.' This conclusion is in accordance with the conclusion of other authors, such as Merlan (who quotes in turn E. Schroeder), that Plotinus "has two alternatives: the 'failing away' from the One, and the 'overflowing of the One', which are 'mutually exclusive.'[174] Also Merlan seems to be of the opinion that the second tendency is more important.

171 II. 4.1.1-3.
172 I. 8.1-5.
173 8.3. 6-8.
174 Merlan, o.c. 114.

If *ón* is ‘qualified being’, whereas both the One and ‘matter’ are unqualified being and can be described only in negations, both entities have indeed many points in common. To this ‘meeting of the extremes’[175] Plotinus makes an allusion when he says: ‘just as the One is *haploûn*, ‘simple’, the *húlē* is also simple’.[176] The difference between the two is a difference in value, Proclus treated this more systematically, as he does almost all the Neoplatonic topics, in his *Stoikheíōsis theologikḗ, Elementatio Theologica*.-This book is set up logically like the ‘Elements’ (*Stoikheîa*) of Euclid and is in this respect a precursor of Spinoza's *Ethica ‘more geometrico demonstrata.’* Proclus speaks about two kinds of *mḕ ón*: *tó mḕ ón hōs kreîtton toû óntos*, ‘the non-(qualified) being which is better than (qualified) being’ (i.e., the One); and *tò mḕ ón hōs kreîtton toû óntos*, ‘the non-(qualified) being which is worse than (qualified) being’ (i.e., the *húlē*).[177] Also other topics dealt with above are treated by Proclus, who is always more definite than Plotinus and nearer to conceptual clarity. He is not a mystic, but a scholar and a great commentator, Śaṅkara corresponds in certain respects to Plotinus and Proclus together.[178] Proclus clearly says that the divine is present everywhere, even in matter,[179] and he derives matter immediately (unlike Plotinus) from the One,[180] thus maintaining and safeguarding the purity of monism.

Also with regard to the *húlē noētḗ*, ‘intelligible matter,’ Proclus has explicit views. Only by conceiving the unlimited as *dúnamis* can this concept be applied to the forms which are by definition limiting factors.[181] In Proclus, says Dodds,[182] ‘it is misleading to call Limit ‘the form of Infinitude’ or the Infinite ‘the Matter of Limit’....For him the essential character of infinitude is *dúnamis*....’.

Proclus solves in a particular way the conflict between a monism, which the ‘Advaitic’ experience as well as human reason

175 ‘Les extrêmes se touchent’ holds here in the fullest sense.
176 VI, 7.13.3-4.
177 *Elementatio Theologica*, ed. E.R. Dodds, Oxford 1933, 122, 272.
178 Cf the incompatible trends in Plotinus with the indistinctness of Śaṅkara's terminology according to Hacker (see above II 14: 142, n. 475).
179 Ed. Dodds, Commentary 231.
180 *Ibid.* 68, 230-232, 239: *ek toû hénos hupostâsa*.
181 *Theologia Platonica* 137-138.
182 *Ibid.* Commentary 247.

in general seem to demand, and a dualism, needed to explain the multiplicity of the phenomena. He places iminediately under the One a duality, which resembles the two concepts *vikṣepa* and *āvaraṇa* of later Advaita or the Sāṁkhya duality of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* if interpreted in an Advaita manner.[183] This duality consists of *tò autóperas* and *hē autopeiría*, the ultimate principles (*arkhaí*) corresponding to *péras* and *apeiría*.[184] These are also identified with the cosmogonic principles of Orphism, *aithḗr*, 'ether (*akāśa*)', and *kháos*, 'chaos'.[185] In this way he gives traditional support to the Neoplatonic doctrines.

Let us now examine whether the *húlē*, and hence the world, can be called *anirvacanīya*. We know already that Plotinus calls his matter neither (absolute) non-being, nor 'qualified' being; but unqualified being. Without stressing the importance of *anirvacanīyatva* as a principle, the unintelligibility of matter and of the One is mentioned and results from the fact that both are outside the realm where intelligibility reigns in particular, i.e., the *kósmos nóētos* of the *nous*. Matter is for instance called 'a shadow of reason' and 'a fall of reason.'[186] Elsewhere, regarding the third hypostasis, Plotinus speaks about the indeterminacy (*aoristía*) of the soul, to which a nescience (*ágnoia*) corresponds which is, however, not a complete absence of knowledge (*apousía*,),[187] just as *avidyā* is nevertheless something positive in Advaita.

That the whole sensible realm is *anirvacanīya* is a widespread idea in one important aspect of Greek thought: the school of Elea. In *Parmenides* there are two kinds of doctrines, the 'one ontological, expressed with unambiguity in the first part of his poem, and the other cosmogonical, expressed in the second part. The latter doctrine is *dóxa*, 'appearance', object of the *dóxai*, unreliable and ambiguous 'opinions', of the mortals. In this realm of *dóxa* there can only be obscurity. The Sophists were interested in such ambiguities. The main work of the Sophist Gorgias was called *Perì tēs phúseōs ḕ toû mḕ óntos, 'Concerning nature or non-being.'* - For Plato the sensible world is unintelligible (the object of *dóxa*, 'opi-

183 As in the *Sarvadarśanasaṁgraha*. Cf. also R. Guénon, *L'homme et son devenir selon le Védānta*, 48 and *ibid.*, *Introduction générale*....243.
184 *Ibid.* 147.
185 *Ibid.* n.l. Proclus *In parm.* 1121.26; *In Tim.* I 176.12.
186 VI. 3.7.8-9.
187 II. 4.10.12-13.

nion', 'coniectura'[188]) and the world of ideas is mainly created in order to have a world where everything is intelligible and transparent (the appropriate object of *epistā̆mē*, 'science'). The ideas are intelligible factors abstracted from experience of the sensible world; they are therefore akin to 'mathematicals.' In the only Platonic dialogue where a consistent attempt is made to deal with the universe and with physics, the *Timaeus* (which has for centuries blocked the progress of physics), we are warned in advance: there can be no knowledge (*epistḗmē*) of the sensible world as of the ideal world; it can be dealt with in a myth only. Such a myth cannot claim any absolute certainty, but only probability.[189]

Another tradition in Greek thought dealt especially with *phúisis* in a series of works entitled *Perì phúseōs*, 'About nature'. When Aristotle wrote his *Physics*, he traced some of his doctrines back to these. 'But there is one view, Aristotle points out, which amounts to the abolition of natural philosophy - the view that reality is single, undivided and unchangeable' (Ross).[190] This is Eleaticism. It is constantly attacked by Aristotle in the historical parts of the *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. In this respect Aristotle is the greatest precursor of modern science, which could never have come into being if nature were really *anirvacanīya*.[191]

5. *Causation and change. The demiurge*

The Eleatic trend of thought in Greek philosophy denies the reality of change and movement. In Advaita and in Eleaticism

188 Cf. Cusanus
189 *Tim*. 29 c-d.
190 Aristotle 63.
191 The Advaitic *anirvacanīya* has been compared with Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty. This seems far-fetched for three reasons: (1) Heisenberg's principle results from observations and experiments, while the Advaitic principle results from philosophic analysis. (2) Heisenberg's principle does not describe nature but deals with our capacity for prediction. It starts with the observation that we cannot perceive nature in the microcosmic realm without affecting it (this can at most be considered an experimental verification of philosophic idealism). (3) Heisenberg's principle is important as a quantitative principle which enables us to measure. It enunciates that the product of two uncertainties (e.g. mass and momentum) is always constant (i.e., *h*).

alike the deepest reason fox this attitude is a denial of the reality of time and of its impact upon things. Psychologically this is connected with the desire that time may have no impact upon the continuation of our own personality, as for instance in the desire for immortality. This view manifests itself, as we have remarked elsewhere,[192] among Indians in the problem of causation (*satkārvāada, satkāraṇavāda, asatkāraṇavāda, pratītyasamutpādavāda*) and among Greeks in the *problem of change* (Eleatic being *versus* Heraclitean becoming). The Indian thinkers asked: how can anything cause anything different from itself? The Greek thinkers asked: how can anything become anything different from itself? The attitude of 'continuity' answered both questions by denying the difference of the second from the first ('*abhedavāda*').

For Parmenides the *mḕ ón*, stands for change and movement, which *is not* whereas the immutable and unchanging *ôn* is. Zeno tried to show the same by a *reductio ad absurdum* of the opposite doctrine (e.g. 'the arrow moves'). In Plato the always changing sensible world is supplemented with an eternal and unchanging realm, the ideal world of forms. We can perfectly know this world and Plato thus interprets and clarifies the ideas of the school of Elea: our thought demands unchangeable being in order to be able to affirm *tò gàr autò esti noeîn tè kaì eînai*, 'for the same is thinking and being'. The Heraclitean flux is difficult to assimilate for human thinking or reasoning (before the infinitesimal calculus) but is more in accordance with experience. Plato comes to care more for experience in the course of his life by an increasing desire to 'save the phenomena', *sōizein tà phainoména*. This amounts to a gradual but fundamental change in Plato's thought. In the *Sophistes*, 'at a certain stage[193] of the argument, it is doubted whether all change in this world must really be denied as utterly unintelligible. The value of the thesis of 'father Parmenides' is doubted, and, hesitatingly, it is concluded that non-being in some respect must be, and being in its turn in some way not be.[194] This little fact of a very un-Eleatic opinion is only

192 *Parmenides and Indian thought* 97.
193 We reproduce here and in the following, between quotation marks, some sentences from the article mentioned in the previous note (99 sq.).
194 241. d. 5-7. Further 249 a.sq.

one out of many later passages, where the generally given image of Plato's metaphysics is completely overturned We see how Plato introduces change in the world of forms, stability in the sensible world, and through that makes the latter partly knowable. So a certain knowledge of nature can arise.'[195]

Aristotle accepts change and attempts to refute the view that change is unreal. 'But, as the phenomenon of change remains difficult for everyone, who wants to understand it in terms of Parmenidean, two-valued logic, he created a new logic; modal logic. With the help of the discrimination of necessary, contingent, possible and impossible predicates, a certain kind of reasoning about change becomes possible. In order to become, actual, something must have been previously possible. That is called its potentiality (*dúnamis*). The pot exists potentially in the clay. The clay Aristotle calls the material cause and the shape of the pot the formal cause. The change from potentiality into actuality needs the agency of something actual, which Aristotle calls the efficient cause. The efficient cause is in the first place a producer of change in the thing changed. As fourth case, there is the final cause, the end or aim, that in the case of the clay-pot can be to carry water. The different causes can merge into another.[196] It is also shown by Aristotle's analysis that transformatory (*pariṇāma*) change cannot be explained without an efficient or a final cause. Of Aristotle's four causes only the efficient cause corresponds to the modern meaning of the term cause. Likewise, *kāraṇa* in *satkāraṇavāda* is not what we should call cause'.

Plotinus foliowed Plato and introduced motion into the intelligible world.[197] But the ancient Eleatic doctrine is still much alive in the structure of his system. The entire 'evolution' of the hypostases is not a change or a temporal process, but a logical-

195 For references to the texts see e.g. C.J. de Vogel, *Examen critique de l'interpretation traditionnelle du Platonisme*. Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale 56 (1951) 249-266.

196 The last cause is also the principle underlying the Sāṁkhya *puruṣārthatā*. The Sāṁkhyas concepts of causality can he interpreted with the aid of Aristotle's four causes; the chain of *satkāryavāda* consists only of material and formal causes; *puruṣārthatā* is a kind of final cause and *Īśvara* the efficient cause.

197 See Enn. VI 2.

ontological relation: 'for every moving entīty there must be something towards which it moves; as this is not the case for the One, we have to assume that it does not move; and when an entity comes after it, it has necessarily to come into being while always turned towards itself. Becoming in time should not be a difficulty for us when speaking about eternal entities: in language we attribute becoming to them in order to express their causal relation and their order'.[198] Bréhier said therefore rightly: 'the succession in which the hypostases are considered indicates only the order of expression, a logical and not a temporal order'.[199] This is consistent with the view that the One is immutable and unchangeable and that becoming is exclusively due to the *húlē*. Plato established this opposition in the *Timaeus* by distinguishing between 'that which always is and has no becoming' and 'that which is always becoming and never is',[200] Proclus called the higher principles *ónta*, 'beings', and the lower *ginómena*, 'products (of becoming)'.[201]

The unreality of becoming follows from the unreality of time and from the timelessness of the One. Likewise the doctrine of cyclical time deprives any possible becoming of its meaning. A relative significance can be given to becoming in terms of the hierarchy of being: time and becoming are said to possess a 'lower reality', But as always in connection with the Neoplatonic doctrine of the hierarchy of being, there are difficulties inherent in the concept of 'degrees' of reality (Parmenides, therefore, excluded such formulations).

198 V. 1.6.15-22.

199 *Philosophie de Plotin*, 39: 'la succession dans laquelle on considère les hypostases n'est qu'un ordre d'exposition, un ordre logique, non pas un ordre temporal'. Cf. R. Guénon, *L'homme et sen devenir*, 63-64: 'quand on parle de l'ordre de développement des posslbilités de manifestation, ou l'ordre dans laquelle doivent être énumérés les éléments qui correspondent aux différents phases de cette développement, il faut avoir bien soin de préciser qu'un tel ordre n'implique qu'une succession purement logique, traduisant d'ailleurs un enchaînement ontologique réel, et qu'il ne saurait en aucune façon être question ici d'une succession temporelle'.

200 *Tim* 27 e.

201 Dodds: Commentary 232; cf. *Theol. Plat.* III 127-129 and *In Tim* I. 386. 25 sq., 437.2 sq.

That creation is absent from the One follows from the immutable character of this highest principle. But creation is mentioned or alluded to in contexts where another being occurs, i.e., the Demiurge, *dēmiourgós*, 'the divine Craftsman'. In Plato the Demiurge occurs mainly, though not exclusively,[202] in the dialogue where an attempt is made to provide a cosmogony, i.e., the *Timaeus*. The Greek term *dēmionrgós* denotes craftsman, artisan, and occurs in that meaning in Plato.[203] In the *Timaeus* the Demiurge 'took over all that is visible-not at rest, but in disordant and unordered motion-and brought it from disorder into order, since he judged that order was in every way the better'.[204] Therefore Ross says, also summarizing other texts: 'Three things existed already independently of him-the unchanging forms, the disordered world of becoming, and space, in which becoming takes place'.[205] It is thus clear that the Demiurge is not a creator out of nothing or, at least, 'out of himself', but a God who gives shape and order to a chaotic preexistent mass, looking for inspiration upon the ideal world of forms as his example. Later his activity in connection with the four elements[206] is described as an evolving, developing or manifesting of 'rudimentary' into 'genuine'. This resembles (but with contrary evaluation: see below) the evolution from the *avyākṛtam* (*rūpam*) into the *vyākṛtam* (*rūpam*) or from the 'subtle' into the 'gross' state. 'By shapes and numbers' the Demiurge shaped into genuine fire, air, water and earth the rudimentary fire, air, water and earth, which alone existed before he began his fashioning work'.[207]

One of the difficult problems of the interpretation of Plato is whether Plato looked upon this Demiurge as a highest God. In the *Republic* another highest being occurs: the idea (form) of the Good. But we do not know the relation between the two and Ross declares: 'There is no foundation, anywhere in Plato, for the

202 Also in the *Republic*, the *Sophistes*, the *Politicus*; see Ross, Plato's theory of Ideas, Oxford 1951, 127-128.

203 e.g. *Rep*. 597 d. *sq*. where it is opposed to the deity, who is called *phutourgós* (see *ed*. Adam, Cambridge 1907 II 391 *ad hoc*).

204 *Tim*. 30 a 3-6, transl. Ross, o.c. 128.

205 *Tim*. 51 e 6-52 b 5, ap. Ross *ibid*.

206 In Greece there were four elements, fire, air, water and earth, as in some Indian schools, while other schools in India added ether as a fifth.

207 *Tim*. 53 a 7-b 5, ap. Ross, o.c. 61.

view that the Demiurge is to be identified with the form of the good, or with the forms taken as a whole'.[208]

In Plotinus this Demiurge occurs and several of the Platonic texts dealing with him are quoted. As a whole the position in Plotinus is clearer than in Plato. There cannot be the least doubt about the fact, that the Demiurge is *lower* than the One. This follows immediately from the nature of the One. Moreover, Plotinus nus affirms it explicitly: Plato's Demiurge is the *nous*.[209] This identification follows from a Neoplatonic interpretation of Plato, as Bréhier[210] has shown: in the *Philebus* the cause is identical with *nous* and the Demiurge is once spoken of as *nous*, 'intelligence'. In the *Timaeus*, on the other hand, the Demiurge produces the soul.[211]

Elsewhere Plotinus calls the Demiurge one of the two aspects of *tò kosmoûn*, 'the ordering principle',[212] and states that the Demiurge is an intemporal entity. 'We must entirely exclude from the Demiurge any thought of past and future and we must attribute to him a life which is immutable (*átreptos*) and timeless (intemporal: *ákhronos*)'.[213] Later it is again affirmed that 'he remains immutable in himself while creating'.[214] This 'creation', moreover, is not an act of will, but a natural and necessary phenomenon: 'it is wholly a natural phenomenon, and he does not make in a way which can be compared to craftsmen'.[215] In short, there is essential difference between the Demiurge and any creator in the monotheistic sense. The Demiurge is close to the impersonal and contemplating intelligence or *nous*. Plotinus makes this very clear by reproaching the Gnostics as follows: 'often they replace

208 Ross, o.c. 127.-There are, however, scholars who have argued that the Demiurge has to be placed under the idea of the Good, e.g. J.H.M.M. Loenen.
209 V. 1.8.5; *dēmiourgos gàr ho noûs autōi*.
210 Notice ad V, 1. 13.
211 Elsewhere Plotinus, following a Platonic text, is more inclined towards an identification of the Demiurge with *nous*, i.e. the soul (see Bréhier, *ibid*).
212 IV. 4.10.1-2.
213 *Ibid*. 4-6.
214 IV. 4.12.32.
215 II. 9.12.17.

the contemplating *nous* by the creative, 'demiurging' (*dēmioûrgousa*) soul'.[216]

In conclusion there are two important parallels with Advaita and one important difference. The parallels are:

(1) Below the impersonal divine (Brahman; the One) there is a personal God (*Īśvara*; the *Dēmiourgós*).[217] This distinction is one of the most interesting views which human being, reflecting about the Divine, has produced. In both philosophies it has been attempted to explain or at any rate to render less unintelligible, how human thought could evolve such a doctrine. The reasons are partly the same and partly related to an analogous historical and social background. Without attempting to explain philosophy from historical reasons a remark of R. Eisler, quoted by E.R. Curtius, is worth mentioning:[218] '....almost everywhere original creation is characterised by heaviness and earthliness, by degrading manual work and by the exertion of physical, 'demiurging', activity....It cannot be denied, that for posterity the myth of creation lost much of its loftiness on account of this....'.

(2) The lower Demiurge or *Īśvara* is not a creator who creates out of nothing. He orders in an impersonal and natural way pre-existent matter, or unfolds and manifests what is virtually already present (in India analogously in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika). Tradition called the Demiurge also '*dator formarum*', 'bestower of forms', and Bréhier 'the cause which rnakes that potential being becomes actual being.'[218a] Both formulations could be very well applied to

216 II. 9.6.21-22.
217 R. Guénon speaks about 'the fundamental distinction...between *Īśvara* who is Being, and Brahma, who is beyond Being' (*Introduction générale* 248: 'la distinction fondamentale....entre *Īśuaras*, qui est Etre, et Brahma qui est au dela de l'Etre'). He utilizes the Neoplatonic distinction in order to present Advaita for which there seems to be no justification in the Advaitic texts.-This is a good example of how Westerners look with Neoplatonic eyes at Advaita.
218 R. Eisler, *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt*, 1910, ap. E.R. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*. Bern 1946, 530: "....fast überall ist die Urschöpfung mit der Erdenschwere eines niedrigen Handwerkes, mit der Mühsal physischer Demiurgie behaftes....Es ist nicht zu leugnen, dass die Schōpfungslegende dadurch in den Augen der Späteren an Erhabenheit einbussen müsste....'
218a *Philosophie de Plotin*, Chap. VII 'cause qui fait que l'être en puissance devient être en acte'.

Īśvara. Both concepts of God pay very little attention to time and its possible impact upon God.

(3) The one important difference between Advaita and Neoplatonism is, that the Demiurge is always regarded as a real entity in itself, whereas *Īśvara* is only real in so far as he is identical with the Absolute. This is later specified as follows: the world and the individual soul are in a different way related to Brahman. The first relation is *bādha-sāmānādhikaraṇya*, 'apposition through sublation', and the second *aikya-sāmānādhikaraṇya*, 'apposition through identity.'[219] But what holds in this respect for the *jīva, a fortiori* holds for *Īśvara*. This is also expressed in the following way: *Īśvara* himself is not illusory but the *Īśvaratva* through which he is different from Brahman, is illusory. The Demiurge, on the other hand, is a real entity in itself. Moreover, the latter's work is, in accordance with this, valued positively, and not negativelỸ as in Advaita: he introduces order 'since he judged that order was in every way better', bringing thus the chaotic world of becoming nearer to the perfection of the ideal world of forms. By the latter activity he imposes forms upon the world, which is a positive act as well (see next section).

At this stage we are in a position to formulate some of the characteristics of the monotheistic concept of God. In Judaism, Christianity and Islam the concept of God is not only different from the Advaitic concept in that God is not the only reality; but it is also in addition different from the Neoplatonic concept, in that he is not a lower entity but a personality and a creator who acts in time. The Neoplatonic position is between the monotheistic and the Advaitic position, but nearer to the latter.[220] (In one respect Advaita seems to be nearer to monotheism than Neoplatonism: for, though the *vyāvahārika* realm is ultimately not real, in this realm much attention is paid to *bhakti*, to devotion and to prayer, which is not so in Plotinus).

219 Cf. also J.F, Staal, *Correlations between language and logic in Indian thought*. Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 23 (1960) 120.

220 It is not feasible to look upon Neoplatonism as a kind of monotheism, as was done by J. Wolf (*Der Gottesbegriff Plotins*, Leipzig 1927) and, to some extent, by A. Speiser (*Der Erlösungsbegriff bei Plotin*, ERANOS-Jahrbuch 1937, Zürich 1938, 414). 'Pantheism' is an unfortunate term since it seems to denote a kind of theism rejected by monotheism.

As far as the concept of God is concerned, there is another important aspect in which Christianity differs from Advaita, from Neoplatonism and from other forms of monotheism. In Christianity there is a God who once (not only in time but) in history, had become man, entirely and unreservedly. This is an incarnated God.[221] Augustine considered this difference the most decisive in describing in the *Confessiones* his conversion from Neoplatonism to Christianity.[222]

Modern philosophical consciousness is so much influenced by the Christian concept of God, even if it is unreligious or atheistic, that we should have a clear picture of these differences. Since one is better aware of one's own position, if one knows its historical background, and some of the following developments are interesting in themselves, and since they explain some later parallelisms between Advaita and Western philosophy, this section will be concluded with a survey of some of the developments resulting from the meeting of the Neoplatonic and Christian concepts of godhead.

In the early Christian[223] middle ages the influence of Neoplatonism was very great and in the end there was once again a

221 Cf. the note on *avatāra* above II 14: 152, n. 519. Cf. also P. Masson-Oursel in: ERANOS-Jahrbuch 1936, Zürich 1937, 132 and: J.F. Staal, *Plotinus and St. Augustine. A note on the phenomenology of sage and saint* in: *A seminar on saints*, Madras 1960, 340-55.

222 According to P. Henry (*Plotin et l'Occident*, Louvain 1934, 236) Augustine could have read in Plotinus, 'que le Verbe était Dieu, et que toutes choses ont été créées par le Verbe, mais non pas que 1e Verbe se soit fait chair, ni qu'il ait habité parmi nous'. Cf. *Confessiones* VII 13 sq.

223 The following survey is limited to the Christian middle ages since they appear to have been more important in constituting modern philosophic consciousness. In the Muslim middle ages there were at least three trends of thought expressed by philosophers, theologian and mystics. (1) The philosophers often reproduced Greek, in particular Aristotelian and Neoplatonic views (e.g. the eternity of the world in Ibn Rushd. (2) The theologians generally rejected and condemned these, but also among them Neoplatonic doctrines occurred (e.g., al-Ghazzālī's *Mushkāt al-anwār*). (3) Some later mystics of the monistie school (*wahdat al-wujūd*; cf. above II 10: 113), especially Ibn 'Arabī and 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, set forth doctrines very similar to Neoplatonism and even Advaita. A later comparison was made by the prince Dara Shikoh (*Majmā'al-bahrain*; cf. L. Massignon et A.M. Kassim, *Un essai de bloeit islamo-hindou au XVIIe siècle*. Revue du Monde Musulman (1926) 1-14; Yusuf Husain; *L'Inde mystique au Moyen Âge*, Paris 1929, 183-6). The thesis of Indian influence on Muslim mysticism as defended by M. Horten (*Indische Strömungen in der islamischen Mystik* I, Heidelberg 1927) is untenable according to L. Massignon. However the latter's arguments in connection with Patañjali's *Yogasūtra* (*Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane*, Paris 1954, 81-98) ought to be reconsidered. R.C. Zaehner adduces new evidence for the thesis of Hindu influence (*Hindu and Muslim mysticism*. London 1960, especially chap. V).

great revival. The position of Christian thinkers regarding Neoplatonism can be easily inferred from their views concerning the relation between God and being. The more orthodox thinkers had to take into account the above mentioned scriptural statement 'I am that I am', interpreted as the identity of God and being.[224] Thus it is intelligible that in the Corpus Areopagiticum, which introduces such a large amount of Neoplatonic thinking into medieval thought under the label of scriptural authority,[225] the author is at least in one respect more Christian than Platonic or Plotinian: he replaces the One-above-being by the divinity who is '*esse omnium*', 'the being of everything'[226] and (in contradistinction to the expression of Speusippus) *oúte anoúsios*, 'not un-essential.[227] But Scotus Eriugena, the earliest of the great medieval thinkers, returns again to the ineffable divinity of Neoplatonism. He says of God that he '*est qui plus quam esse est*' 'is he who is more than being.'[228]

In the central and most creative period of medieval Christian thought, in the XIIIth century, when the writings of Aristotle and

224 Cf. also K. Jaspers, *Philosophie* III 67. - Analogously in Islam in the Qur'an Allah is called *al-qaiyūm*, 'he who exists through himself' (2.256; 3.1) (Cf. *svayambhū*. IU 8). 'Ataer der Seiende', *al-wājid*, findet sich im Qur'an nicht obwohl es sehr gut vorkommen konnte" (D.B. Macdonald in: *Handwŏrterbuch des Islam*, Leiden 1941, 40 b).

225 Dionysius the Areopagite, one of the earliest Christians (see *Acts* 17.34), was erroneously looked upon as the author of the Corpus Areopagiticum ever since its first translator into Latin from Greek, Hilduin. How important this text was considered to be, can be gathered from the fact that during the middle ages it has been translated at least four times after Hilduin (by Scotus Eriugena, Johannes Sarracenus, Robert Grosseteste and Embrogio Traversari). Erasmus doubted the authenticity, as he discerned the Neoplatonic character of these writings. Thomas Aquinas had also considered them authentic.

226 *Gilson*, o.c. 383.

227 *De Mystica Theologia* IV.

228 Gilson, o.c. 209.

of the great Muslim philosophers have been translated and thoroughly assimilated, Thomas Aquinas gives a solution to the problem of the relation between God and being which was foreshadowed since Aristotle in the celebrated *analogia entis*. In this view neither is God's being identified with the being of the creatures (a view tending towards pantheism),[229] nor is God made inaccessible and wholly ineffable by being above being; but there is an analogy between our being (e.g., the mode in which our attributes are in us), and God's being (e.g., the mode in which his attributes are in him). This complex doctrine resembles the Advaitic *laksaṇajñāna* (e.g. in the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*), especially studied by R. de Smet.[230]

With the last great medieval mystics we are once again back in the Neoplatonic atmosphere, which later re-appeared fully in the Italian Renascence of Neoplatonism (e.g. the Philosopher Marsilio Ficino, translator of the *Enneads* and of Dionysius into Latin). Gilson said about Meister Eckehart: ‘Not only one comes back to Eriugena and Dionysius, but one comes back as if there had been no Thomas Aquinas or Albertus Magnus in between.’[231] The most striking characteristic of the German mystic is the doctrine of a impersonal deity (*Gottheit*), which manifests and reveals itself in a personal God (*Gott*); ‘“Gott” geht hervor aus der “gottgebarenden Gottheit” und verfliesst auch wieder in sie’: ‘“God” proceeds from the “Deity-who-gives-birth-to-God”, and merges again into it.’[232] Accordingly Eckehart preaches contemplation, a detachment of the human personality.[233] The deity is called ‘*aliquad altius ente*’, ‘something higher than being.’[234] It is not surprising that these doctrines were condemned by the Church in

229 Cf. for instance Arnaury de Bène (end XIIth century), of whom it was said: ‘*dixit quod Deus erat ominia*’, ‘he said that God was everything’ (Gilson, o.e. 383).
230 See above II 4: 61, n. 134.
231 Gilson, o.c. 699; ‘Non seulement on revient à Erigène et à Denys, mais on y revient en dépit de Thomas d'Aquin et d'Albert le Grand’.
232 *Meister Eckeharts Schriften und Predigten*, übers. N. Buttner, Jena 1912, Einleitung li.
233 Cf. the motto of A.K. Coomaraswamy, *Hindouisme et Bouddhisme*, Paris 1939.
234 This is fully discussed in relation to the scriptural statement by Gilson, o.c. 695-696.

the famous buil of 1329.[235] It is more important that they were in general rejected implicitly by Western philosophical consciousness, of which the Christian concept of God is an important constituent.

What does this last statement actually mean? It means, amongst other things, that the early Christians, when they evolved the concept of divine personality, partly discovered and partly created a structure of their own personality. Subsequently by religious and secular *imitatio Christi* and through belief in the statement ‘God has created man in his image,’ Western philosophical consciousness increasingly considered man in general as a being characterised in the same way as Christ was characterised in the beginning. This is a similar development as that from belief in immortality of the Pharaoh to belief in immortality of each human being. The resulting discovery but also creation of important aspects of human being is philosophically speaking the richest fruit of the doctrine of Christ's becoming man. This does not mean that Western culture as a whole is relativized and determined by particular and possibly limited religious views; but it shows how man, as in all religions, discovered and created his own characteristics by attributing them to the Divine.

What this means could be shown in greater detail by giving further examples (analogous ones will be mentioned in the next section). A few may be mentioned. That God was considered a personality has come to signify to the West that the personal is higher than the impersonal.[236] That God was considered a creator out of nothing has come to signify to the West that the personality

235 H.W. Schomerus who compared the doctrines of Meister Eckehart and of the Tamil saint Manikka-Vasagar, comes to the conclusion that the resemblance and parallels are striking, but rightly stresses the difference in the relation of both to their respective religious background: Manikka-Vasagar was a true Hindu in the tradition of the Upaniṣads, Meister Eckehart was undoubtedly pious and sincere, but not a Christian (H.W. Schomerus, *Meister Eckehart und Manikka-vasagar: Mystik auf deutschen und indischen*, Gütersloh 1936).

236 Goethe may be taken as representative:

> ‘Höchstes Glück der Menschenkinder
> Ist doch die Personlichkeit’
>
> ‘the highest joy of human beings is personality’.

of man implies that he can create freely and out of nothing,[237] This applies not only to daily decisions but also to art, philosophy, the sciences and humanities, in short, to the culture which man has created himself and in which he lives more than in nature. That God has created once, become man once, etc., (there are other ‘unicities’ in Christianity and monotheism in general) has given to man his unicity and the conviction that he is irreplaceable. In this perspective unique importance is attached to this one life and reincarnation is rejected. That God has become man and has incarnated himself signifies that the human personality is considered a unity of spirit and body and not a soul ‘in’ the jail or grave of the body which can also exist independently. Thus there may be a struggle within the personality, against itself; but not of the soul against the body. Lastly, that God is free, has come to mean that man is free. Freedom in philosophy has manifested itself as doubt, first methodical (Descartes) and then existential (Pascal).

6. *Names and forms*.

Both *Īśvara* and the Demiurge produce or evolve the manifold world of names and forms. In the former case this process is evaluated negatively, in the latter case positively. We shall see that in Western culture names and forms are generally evaluated highly, as a result of the inheritance of both Greek culture, which evaluated the formed more highly than the formless, and of the Christian religion, which evaluated the named more highly than the nameless.

That the Demiurge as *dator formarum* ‘giver of forms’, does a positive work speaks for itself in the Greek tradition, for, the main trend of Greek philosophy since the Pythagoreans is to prefer the limited to the unlimited-for example cosmos to chaos. The Platonic theory of ideas placed above a chaotic and formless sensible world a perfect and ideal world of forms. In this connection it should not be forgotton that the Platonic term *eídos* means

237 As it is better, when seeking for implicit but widespread views, not only to look at the explicit statements of philosophers, we may again quote Goethe, speaking about ‘that rigid way of thinking: nothing can come to be except what already is’ (*Compagne in Frankreich* 1792, Weimar - ed, XXXIII, 196 sq.).

form and is only conventionally translated as ‘idea’ (which is *idea*, another term for form). In the *Republic* the highest existing entity is a form, the form of the good. In Aristotle the formal cause is more highly evaluated than the material cause. Aristotle also discovered formal logic, and developed it to a very high degree.

This evaluation pervades Greek culture in all its aspects. It is apparent in the evaluation of the arts which are manifestations of human creativity where forms occur in their utmost purity. The achievements of the arts were certainly not greater or more in one culture than in the other. But their place and function in culture and society was different, as can be seen in at least two important respects.

(1) Whereas the Greek philosophers, especially Plato, and, as we will see below, Plotinus, as well as for instance the Greek statesmen, attached a high value to the arts in the scale of human values and in the whole of society, none of the great Indian thinkers in the Upaniṣadic or in the Buddhistic tradition and none of India's spiritual leaders (with the possible exemption of Śrī Aurobindo) seem to have had much regard for the arts which belong to the realm of forms. Greece stands here more or less alone and what the modern West evaluates in the arts comes mainly from the Greek legacy, since in Christianity also the arts were not as much favoured as in Greece. This applies especially to Protestantism and to the early Christians.[238]

(2) When we look at images which represent God, we have to make a similar distinction between Greece on the one side and India as well as the monotheistic religions on the other side, though India is in this respect much nearer to Greece (cf. in general the abundance of images of Gods) than monotheism. The ancient Greeks represented their Gods as embodied in perfect and beautiful but natural human bodies. The Jews, the Muslims and among Christians especially the Protestants did not allow any representation of God; therefore synagogues, mosques and Protestant churches make the impression of emptiness when compared with Hindu

238 Protestant puritanism, widespread and strong in Great Britain, travelled to India and joined the traditional Hindu ideal of the formless. to create a negative attitude towards the arts in contemporary India.

temples and Catholic churches.[239] Representation of the human being in general is not much developed in strictly monotheistic cultures.[240] Even in Roman Catholicism images of God the father are relatively rare, though images of Christ, Mary, the saints and apostles are common. In India the idea of the formless is especially expressed in Buddhist art (also in Buddhism the concepts of *nāmarūpe* play a very important role). In the *stūpas* there is no figuration and in early Buddhist art (e.g. in Amarāvatī) the central seat is not occupied by a Buddha image but is either empty or occupied by a symbol (tree; *cakra*; etc.).

In Hinduism images of Gods are of course very frequent and create at first sight the impression that forms are throughout attributed to all deities. But it has to be observed that (a) The highest divine entity, Brahman, is never represented in such a way. (b) Images are mainly objects for concentration and meditation, from which the person who meditates has to ascend to the formless divine;[241] accordingly images are judged on iconographical, not on esthetic grounds (c) Symbolic representations are widespread and often preferred: for example the *liṅga, yantras* such as *śvī cakra*, divine attributes, e.g.5 Viṣṇu's conch, etc, (d) Abundance of sculpture can be observed on the outer walls of the temples or the *garbha-gṛha*, but never inside the latter.[242] (e) In general the manifoldness of divine forms tend to show the merely relative significance of each of them. (f) Special phenomena, e.g., the Naṭarāja-temple of Chidambaram, where on the left of the image there is a large screen, called the *ākāśa-liṅgam* (also: '*Chidam-bararahasyam*'); etc. (g) Natural forms are transcended and an attempt is made to go to the formless by disregarding the claims of nature. This partly explains images of Gods with many arms, legs or heads (this is not merely the expression of supernatural

239 Cf. R. Otto, *Das Heilige, München* 1936, 87; the same, *Aufsātze das Numinose betreffend*, Gotha 1923, 103-13: 'Das Leere in der Baukunst des Islam'; cf. *ibid*. 171-8.

240 Persian Muslim art underscores the resistance of ancient Iranian culture against Muslim puritanism. In Islam the arts were regularly criticized by reformist movements, e.g., the Wahabīya in Arabia. The Biblical prohibition favoured the development of abstract arts, e.g. calligraphy.

241 See especially H. Zimmer, *Kunstform und Yoga im indischen Kultbild*, Berlin 1926.

242 See e.g. S. Kramrisch, *The Hindu, Temple*, Calcutta 1946, II, 299.

power).[243] (h) The images of Hindu Gods, even when represented in 'regular' human bodies, do not make the impression of a natural human body but manifest a stylized and abstract, unhuman form.[244] These typical phenomena did not occur amongst the Greeks (though it might be possible to find exceptions, e.g., the Nike of Samothrace referred to by Coomaraswamy).

This shows that the Greeks attached more importance to (natural) forms than the Indians. In the West this is traceable almost everywhere outside the religious realm. As an example the German term Bildung may be referred to. This noun is derived from the verb *bilden*, 'to give shape, to form, to cast, to carve, to model'. *Bild* means a painting, *Bildnis* a portrait, *Bildner* a sculptor. *Bildung*[245] denotes the ideal development of human personality: it means education, refinement, learning, erudition, and culture. The ideal human being, the counterpart of the British 'gentleman', is the man who is *gebildet* (that German reality did not always correspond to the ideal need not occupy us here).

In Neoplatonism Plotinus accepts the Platonic world of forms in his second hypostasis, the *nous*, as *kósmos nóētos*, 'intelligible cosmos'. Though it is un-Hellenic on his part to call the One *aneídeos*, 'formless', this is an immediate consequence of his metaphysical position, which culminates in the concept of the distinctionless One. But Plotinus does not maintain this distinction in the same manner throughout his system and does not disregard his Greek background. In general, the forms are evaluated more highly than the formless. The paradox, arising on account of this is best expressed in his doctrine that the divine is without form while everything else is more divine, the more it possesses form and the more it limits itself. For exampie: 'The social virtues .... give order (*katakosmoûsin*) to us and make us better;

243 Cf. A.K. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Siva*, New York, London 1924, 67-71: 'Indian images with many arms'. The author stresses the fact that art should not be looked upon as illustration and that it is the inner unity, not the representation of natural forms, which creates a work of art. This is perfectly true, but it does not explain the occurrence of un-natural forms.

244 Cf. H. Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, London 1952, 205-17: 'Jaina images'.

245 Cf. *saṁskṛta* for the well-shaped, refined, cultured language.

they limit (*horízousai*) and measure (*metroûsai*) our desires and all our passions and take away our errors; because an entity becomes better by being limited and by being as such outside the realm of the unmeasured and the unlimited .... But what is entirely measureless, the *húlē*, does not resemble God in any respect; the more a being participates in a form, the more it resembles the formless divine'.[246] Again therefore there is resemblance between the highest and the lowest.[247] While the highest is formless, what comes immediately under it is the richest form and when we descend further we find increasing formlessness again. Therefore 'the essence produced by the One is a form-it would be impossible to hold that the One would produce anything but a form. But this form is not particular, but universal, not leaving any other form outside itself: therefore the One itself is formless'.[248] The supremacy of forms is traceable throughout the hierarchy of the hypostases. 'The *noûs dēmiourgós* gives to the soul which is inferior to it forms of which there are again traces in the realm of the third hypostasis'.[249] From. the *húlē* we ascend to the higher realities by imposing more forms: 'Thus everything consists of the forms of the elements. Firstly the *hûlē*; upon these other forms are imposed, and then again others. Thus it becomes difficult to discover the *hûlē* which is hidden under so many forms'.[250]

Plotinus' theory of the beautiful accords an equally high place to the forms, while at the summit the most beautiful is a form, 'but shapeless'. 'Therefore when one speaks about beauty, one should not think about any particular shape (*morphḗ*) .... The shapeless form (*ámorphon eídos*) is beautiful, because it is a form.'[251] Beauty means form, and hence ugliness, the absence of beauty in Plotinus' monistic opinion, means 'absence of form' (*eídous apousía*).[252] The One being formless, the beautiful is

246 I. 2.2. 13-22.
247 See above III, 4: 194.
248 V. 6. 1-5.
249 II. 3.18. 15-16.
250 V. 8.7. 18-22.
251 VI. 7.33. 1-4.
252 VI. 1.9.17. Cf. Pistorius, o.c. 149, who criticizes Inge for having held that ugliness was wrong form: for form is never wrong and ugliness is only the absence of form.

therefore subordinated to the One. The Good is beyond the beautiful,[253] it is itself 'super-beautiful' (*hupérkalos*),[254] it is 'more ancient than the beautiful and prior to it.'[255] Though coming immediately after the One, the beautiful still plays a very important part in Plotinus' thought as is for example visible in the celebrated treatise 'On beauty'.[256]

This highly Platonizing treatise, the first which Plotinus wrote,[257] shows in a characteristic way how Plotinus ascends from the sensible realm up to the One, combining the high evaluation of forms with the concept of the formless One. He describes how the soul is attracted by 'sensible' beauty (*tò en toîs sōmasi kalón*, 'the beauty (residing) in the bodies') and is repelled by ugliness. But this attraction takes place on account of the 'intelligible' beauty which it remembers and discovers in itself. What constitutes the resemblance of beauty here (in the sensible realm) and there (in the intelligible realm)? 'That is, we say, on account of participation in a form (*metokhēi eídous*). For everything shapeless is growing towards a shape, whereas a form(?) remains ugly outside the divine reason (*lógos*) when it possesses neither reason nor form; that would result in absolute ugliness'.[258] Later he speaks about sensible beauty arising on account of an 'interior form' (*éndon eídos*).[259] Henceforward the treatise deals with the higher forms of beauty, residing in the unseen, experienced by each soul but in particular by the loving soul.[260] He speaks about love and the beauty of man, the beauty of character and the beauty of virtue. Here beauty becomes reality (*tà ónta*),[261] and the beautiful and the Good are one.[262] But having reached the highest Good and the One, it becomes clear how everything is beautiful through its participation in the One. Whoever has seen the latter

253 I. 6.9. 37-38.
254 I. 8.2.8.
255 V. 5.12.18.
256 I. G: *Perí toû kaloû*,
257 *Vita Plotini* 4.22.
258 I. 6.2. 1-13 (in paraphrase); 13-16 (in translation).
259 *Ibid.* 3.8.
260 *Ibid.*, 4.19.
261 *Ibid.*, 6.21. Cf. *Phaedrus* 249 c.
262 *Ibid.*, 26.

cannot but love it for its beauty.[263] And descending again he sees how ‘all other beauties are acquired, mixed and not primary: they derive from the One’.[264] Lastly he sees also the beauty in himself: ‘Turn towards yourself and look. And if you don't see your own beauty yet, do as the sculptor does of a statue, that should become beautiful. He removes a portion of the marble, he scrapes, he polishes and purifies until the beautiful lineament manifests itseif in the marble. Like him, remove the superfluous, straighten the oblique, purify all that is dark in order to make it brilliant and do not pause modelling your own sculpture, until the divine splendour of virtue manifests itself....’.[265] Here one image displays the high regard for forms as well as the one Plotinian trend which approaches Advaita, i.e., the view that the divine manifests itself in the self and is not the product of a transformation but only of the removal of obstacles. This is clear from the description of the sculptor, which is given in a way as if the statue was preexistent in the rough stone and only discovered and made manifest by removing what hid it.[266] But the One, though formless, is at the sarae time the principle which gives form to everything else, or as Bréhier called it, ‘the unconditioned, the measure, whose function it is to provide to beings their limits’.[267]

We may conclude, that in Plotinus form is higher than formless, although the highest principle itself is formless: preference of form to the formless is characteristically Greek. In India, on the other hand, the formless is, especially in the Upaniṣadic and the Buddhist tradition (not in the Brāhmaṇas or in Pūrva Mīmāṁsā) considered higher than any form.

The second half of the above thesis must now be substantiated, i.e., that in Christianity and hence in the Christian West the name is evaluated more highly than the nameless,[268] whereas the con-

263 *Ibid.*, 7. 15-16.
264 *Ibid.*, 24-25.
265 *Ibid.*, 9. 7-14.
266 Michelangelo described his modelling in similar terms, without stressing the positive, creative aspect of it.
267 *Philosophie de Plotin*. Chap. VII, referring to VI. 7. 35; ‘L'inconditionné, la mesure dont la fonction est de donner leurs limites aux êtres’.
268 It is possible that in both cases the evaluation of names can be related to an archaic mode of thought which attaches excessive importance to name-giving. Cf. Adani's namiiig of animals in *Genesis* 2.19 and the Hindu rite of *nāmadheyakaraṇa* (e.g., in A. Hillebrandt, *Ritualliteratur*, Strassburg 1897, 46-7; P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra* II, Poona 1941, 238-54; the same, *Naming a child or a person*, Indian Historical Quarterly 14 (1938) 24-44). Cf. also J.F. Staal, *Parmenides and Indian Thought* 92. In order to study these relationships more anthropological and psychological evidence is needed.

trary holds in the Upaniṣadic tradition.[269] As this diverts from Greek philosophy a few indications must be sufficient. There are at least two kinds of contexts where this high evaluation of names in the West is given: (1) in the first the name of God is looked upon as of high value; (2) in the second the activity of creation through names and forms. is evaluated positively.

(1) (a) Amongst the Jews it is customary to avoid pronouncing the name of God, which is considered exceptionally holy, when reading or reciting the Old Testament. When the unvocalised name JHWH occurs it is pronounced as *ha-shem*, 'the name', (b) The above mentioned words of God, 'I am that I am', are regarded as the long expected revelation of the divine name: Moses said unto God .... 'the children of Israel .... shall say to me: What is his name?' .... And God said: 'Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: *I am* hath sent me unto you....The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob .... this is my name for ever'.[270] Consequently the three monotheistic religions tended to object to calling God the ineffable despite Negative Theology, which was often Neoplatonic in character. (c) The exceptional importance of the divine name continues to live in Christianity and Islam, where important statements of events are sanctified by pronouncing the words 'in the name of God'-'*bismillāhi*'. (d) In Islam the ninety nine holy names of Allah collected from the Qu'ran are considered very holy and play an important part in later mystical speculation. The names of God have also been related to the angles and the platonic forms (this is connected with the interpretation by Philo of Alexandria of the Platonic forms as the thoughts of God).[271] In Christian speculation angels and Platonic forms were also identified. In Islam

269 See especially *CU* 6.1.4. Cf. above II, 12.
270 *Exodus* 3.13-5.
271 According to de Vogel traces of this identification go back to Plato's *Sophistes* and *Timaeus* and to the first generation after Plato. See C.J. de Vogel. *Â la recherche des étapes précises entre Platon et le Néoplatonisme*, Mnemosyne 1954, 111-122. This paper was not accessible to me

the exact counterpart, with contrary evaluation, of the *nāmarūpe* can be found. Though such enumerations of names have a close resemblance to Hindu lists of divine names, e.g. the *Viṣṇusahasranāama* there is in Islam no higher corrective such as the Upaniṣadic 'that from which all words recoil....'[272]. (e) In the gospel of St. John Christ is conceived as the Logos, the creative divine word, which denotes both the divine and the relation between God and the world.

These high evaluations do not occur in the *pāramārthika* realm of Advaita, but might well occur in other aspects of Hinduism, as we saw already from the instance of the *Viṣṇusahasranāma*. Moreover, just as the Jews hesitated to pronounce the name of God, the *Bṛhadāranyaka* says[273] that the Gods are fond of the cryptic and indirect (*parokṣapriyā iva hi devāh*). The Gods prefer the indirect and cryptic name Indra to the direct name Indha.[274] On the other hand, all over India the recitation of the divine name is considered beneficial. In a Purāṇic legend Rāma demonstrated to Hanuman that the name Rāma was more powerful than he was himself. In Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, Chaitanya held that the name of the deity is identical with the deity itself. Therefore the naming of the deity is the highest means for realizing the love of Kṛṣṇa.[275]

The Christian Logos is not dissimilar to the Indian *śabda*. The latter does not only apnear, however, in religious speculation, but has philosophical as well as grammatical affiliations. In philosophy the relationship between *śabda* 'word' and *artha* 'meaning' is primarily discussed in Pūrva Mīmaṁhsā and in Nyāya.[276]. The discussions relating to the fourth *pramāṇa* (*śabda*) are partly logical, partly theological. In Bhartṛhari's *śabdādvaita* metaphysical speculation is closely related to grammatical analysis.[277]

272 *yato vāco nivartante....Tait. Up.*, 2.4.
273 4.2.2. Cf. *Śatapathabrāhmana* 9.1.1.2; Mahadevan, *Gauḍapāda* 66, 97.
274 In the Sāmaveda the *stobhas* and special *svarūpa* forms (e.g., *bhakāraprayoga*) hide the syllables so that the chants are unintelligible for others than those for whom they are intended. Cf. E. Faddegon, *Ritual Dadaism*, Acta Orientalia 5 (1926) 177 sq;. and J.F. Staal, *Nambudiri Veda Recitation*, 's-Gravenhage 1961, 28-30, 64 sq.
275 See N. Sanyal, *Sree Chaitanya* I, Madras 1933, 588, 601 and Index.
276 See e.g., Jha, *op. cit.* chapts. XIV-XV.
277 See e.g., D.S. Ruegg, *Contributions à l'histoire de la philosophie linguistique indienne*, Paris 1959, 57-93 (cf. J.F. Staal in *Philosophy East and West* 10 (1960) 53-7).

(2) In Christianity the Logos embodies the creative forces of the divine. God created through the Logos when he said: 'Let there be light'-and there was light.[278] In the Qur'an the whole creation has come into being through the creative word 'Be'! ('*Kun*') of Allah. The view of creation out of nothing tends to stress the value of the creative word. In accordance with a low evaluation of words and names on the other hand, creation is denied and no actual change is supposed to take place, when names are assigned to things.

The high evaluation of names and naming continues to live in the Western interest in linguistic expression. While this opposes the Advaitic ideal, which goes beyond names and language, Advaita is in this respect an exception to the general Indian pattern. Few civilizations have paid as much attention to language and linguistic expression as Indians did from the earliest times. As early as the *Ṛgveda* there is interest in the creative power of the word in poetry and thought.[279] This is transferred to the level of creation in the Brāhmaṇas where, according to Silburn, 'the *nāmarūpe* are not the perishable forms regarded as inferior in the Upaniṣads' but 'the structure which orders the confusion inherent in the spontaneous activity of Prajāpati'.[280] Only a very high evaluation of linguistic and literary expression can explain that *vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *nirukta* (etymology), *chandas* (the Science of metre), *alaṁkāra* ('literary omamentation') and other branches of knowledge deal directly or indirectly with these topics. Though these developments are more in the spirit of Pūrva Mīmāṁsā, both Pūrva and Uttara Mīmāṁsās are concerned with problems of linguistic interpretation and adopt methods of interpretation used by the grammarians.[281]

Though Advaita considers the formless superior to forms, the artistic experience of forms is accepted in a special context. A work of art is effective through *rasa* and this gives rise to a certain

278 *Genesis*, 1.3.

279 See L. Renou, *Les pouvoirs de la parole dans le Ṛgveda*. E'tudes védiques et Pāninéennes I, Paris 1955, 1-27.

280 Silburn, *Instant et cause* 58.

281 Cf. L, Renou, *Connexions entre le rituel et la grammaire en sanskrit*. Journal Asiatique 233 (1941-42) 105-65; the same, *Grammaire et Védānta*, Journal Asiatique 245 (1957) 121-33.

joy in the experiencer (*rasānanda*). This joy has something in common with the highest bliss, *brahmānanda*. Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka held 'the esthetic experience to be akin to the mystic realization of Brahman'.[282] According to the philosophers of *Alaṁhāra* the difference between the two was due to the fact that *alaṁhāra*, 'egoity', subsisted in *rasānanda* (though it was there of a pure, *sāttvika* type), whereas it had disappeared in *brahmānanda*. Whether the latter value could conversely be incorporated in the theory of *rasas* was a much debated question. Those who denied that there could be any connection between mokṣsa and esthetic values, held that *śānta* ought not to be incorporated amongst the *rasas*. In fact, Bharata gave eight *rasas*.[283] But Abhinavagupta, his commentator, as Dr. V. Raghavan informs me, showed, that not only *śānta* is admissible as an esthetic sentiment, but that all esthetic experience is in essence of the nature of *śānta*. Later comes Bhoja with a new theory, in which only one *rasa* is recognised, i.e. *śṛṄgāra*, 'love'. With reference to Advaita, this is called, *pāramārthika rasa*, and it is distinct from *vyāvahārika rasa*. The most basic type of this *rasa* is *mokṣa śṛṅgāra*.[284] Moreover the presence of this fundamental *rasa* in a doctrine accepting only one *rasa* enabled the author of the *Sāhitya Mīmāṁsā* to call Bhoja's new rasa theory '*śṛṅgāra Advaita*.'[285]

The Logos theory occurs under a certain form in Plotinus too. The idea goes back at least as far as Heraclitus, for whom *logos* was 'common to all things' (*xunòn pâsi*).[286] But 'the *logos* according to which everything occurs', says Jaeger,[287] 'is the divine law itself'. For Philo of Alexandria the *logos* is the first intermediary between God and man, and is assimilated to chance as well as to destiny. For Plotinus the latter obtains as well,[288] but in the *Enneads* the more important function of the *logos* is to

282 K.C. Pandey, *Indian Aesthetics* I, Banares 1950, 61
283 See V. Raghavan, *The number of rasas*, Journal of Oriental Research, Madras, s.d.
284 V. Raghavan, *Bhoja's Śṛṅgāra Prakāśa*, Bomhay s.d. I, 2, 486.
285 161, ap. Raghavan, o.c. 482.
286 Fragment B 113 (Diels).
287 W. Jaeger, *The theology of the early Greek philosophers*, Oxford 1947, 116.
288 See for this, and for the whole paragraph, Bréhier's *Notice ad hoc* III, 2-3, p. 18 sq.

cause the conflict and harmony of contrary forces (*tà enantía; dvandvas*). It becomes the principle of contrariety and equilibrium, and thereby a not very clear answer to the difficult question of the theodicee or the parallel problem of the origin of multiplicity from unity. When we ask what is the place of *logos* in the architecture of the hypostases, we find no definite answer. The reason for this probably is that the *logos* works on all levels and is a general concept of connection and relation.[289]

In conclusion, the pair of concepts, *nāmarūpe* occupying a low position in the Upaniṣadic tradition, and also in Advaita and Buddhism, but not in Indian thought as a whole (neither in the Brāhmaṇas, nor in Pūrva Mīmāmśā, nor in several later schools of thought) is highly evaluated in the West.

7. *Two levels and double truth*

Though Plotinus does not make a distinction between a *pāramārthika* and a *vyāvahārika* realm there are some indications which point in a similar direction.

Firstly, Plotinus is well aware of the fact that bis monism makes it very difficult to speak a language which is essentially dualistic. He says: ‘if we have to use these expressions, though they are not correct, we have to realize that, correctly speaking, we cannot admit any duahty, not even a logical one...but we have to compromise in, our expressions’, and: ‘One has to excuse us when we, speaking about the One, use necessarily, in order to express our thought, words, which we don't want to use when speaking correctly (*akribeíai*). To each of them one has to add an ‘as if’ (*hoîion*)[290]

Secondly, Plotinus often looks upon the popular Greek Gods as symbols for the hypostases of his system. He regards their representation in religion as exoteric and himself gives an esoteric interpretation. For example, Zeus stands for the *soul*, Cronos for the *nous* and Ouranos for the One. Such esoteric interpretations were apparently common in the syncretism of Alexandria, where even the *Iliad* and *Odyssea* underwent a consistently spiri-

289 Cf. Burnet who translated *logos* in Heraclitus as ‘measure’
290 VI. 8.13. 1-5; 47-50.

tual interpretation (Odysseus' journeys represent the wanderings of the human soul in its search for the divine). The same happened in later Hinduism to the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana*. The best example of allegorical interpretation occurs in the treatise 'On love' or 'On Eros',[291] where Cronos is the *nous*, Aphrodite the soul and Eros the vision which the soul possesses when it turns towards the *nous*.[292]

Thirdly, Plotinus expresses his views concerning myths in general, in the last chapter of the same treatise. According to him, myths narrate in time and as a story the timeless truth about timeless entities. 'The myths, when they are really myths, have to separate in time that about which they speak and make distinctions between many things which are in fact simultaneous and only distinguishable in rank and in potentiality. Moreover, even for him (i.e., Plato), myths deal with unoriginated entities in narrations and stories about origination, and they separate all that ought to be together. But when we once know the manner in which myths teach, we are entitled to combine data which are actually dispersed'.[293] Bréhier rightly remarks that these views concerning myths must have originated among Platonists who attempted to reconcile the eternity of the world with the description of its origination and creation in the *Timaeūs* (cf. the *niṣprapañca* and *saprapañca* views in the Upaniṣads). But all truth about timeless entities is endowed with a temporal character or seen through a temporal veil when expressed in language, as language is a temporal phenomenon. Therefore Plotinus himself speaks often about the hypostases as originating from each other, whereas they are in fact timeless and only logically and ontologically connected.[294]

Both Indians and Greeks professed the perpetuity of the World, Plotinus says for instance: 'To ask why the world has been created... .is the same as to ask why the Demiurge has produced. This is based however upon the assumption that there were a beginning (*arkhḗ*) of that which has always been there (*toû aeí*).'[295]

291 III. 5: *perî érōtos.*
292 See *Bréhier Notice., ad hoc*, 72.
293 III. 5.9. 24-29
294 Cf. above, III, 5; 199 with note 199.
295 II. 9.8. 1-3.

Several of the Arab philosophers, like *Ibn Rushd* (Averroes), accepted this, combining it with monotheistic creation by characterizing the latter as a myth which symbolically and figuratively expounds in time the timeless truth of non-origination. *Ibn Rushd* tried to prove the perpetuity of the world by reasoning as follows: God is eternal; therefore a first instant does not exist; therefore time is eternal; therefore motion (which is, as in Aristotle, the cause of time) is eternal; therefore the sum total of all motions, i.e., the world, is eternal. Or elsewhere, shortly: God is eternal; the world is God's work; therefore the world is eternal.

Many Muslims (like al-Ghazzālī) and Christians rejected this. The difference in opinion has been very clearly expressed by the contemporary Protestant theologian Karl Barth. Whereas myths, says he, refer to eternal truth or truths (this in accordance with Plotinus' view) creation as described in the Bible speaks about an 'absolute beginning',[296] so that one cannot speak about a myth of creation. 'There is no myth of creation, as creation as such can never be described in a myth. In the Babylonian myth of creation it is for instance evident that we are dealing with a myth of becoming and declining, which can principally not be related to *Genesis* 1 and 2.[297] ...The interesting point of the biblical record of creation is exactly that it is closely related to the history of Israel.... This history begins according to the Old Testament with the creation by God of heaven and earth'.[298]

In Roman Catholicism philosophers have been less uncompromising. Thomas Aquinas understood that neither the eternity of the world, nor its contrary, could be proved (as respectively *Ibn*

296 'schlechthinige Anfang'.

297 Whether this is historically true or the outcome of the Christian desire to prove the unicity of Christianity, need not concern us here: we are interested in the Christian concept of creation.

298 K. Barth, *Dogmatik im Grundriss*, Zürich 1947, 58-59; 'Es gibt keinen Schöpfungsmythus, weil die Schòpfung als solche eben den Mythus nicht zugānglich ist. So wird es beim babylonischen Schöpfungsmythus z.B. ganz klar, dass es sich hier um einen Mythus von Werden und Vergehen handelt, der mit Gen. 1 und 2 grundsätzlich nicht in Beziehung zu setzen ist...das ist ja das Merkwürdige der biblischen Schöpfungsgeschichten, dass sie im strengen Zusammenhang mit der *Geschichte Israels* stehen...Diese Geschichte beginnt nach dem Alten Testament schon damit, dass Gott den Himmel und die Erde geschafEen hat'.

Rushd and Bonaventura had attempted to do). We must, therefore, according to him, resort to revelation (just as Śankara would do in the suprasensible realm), which teaches us in fact that the would has a beginning. This we must therefore believe though we are unable to prove it or know it properly.[299] Other medieval philosophers went much further and rejected altogether the unicity of creation. In the third century Plotinus' contemporary Origenes taught that everything comes back and that time is a *kúklos*, a 'cycle'. Even the incarnation of Christ is a regularly recurrent phenomenon, thereby becoming an *avatāra*. Thousand years later, in the thirteenth century, Sigher of Brabant expounds the same view. Everything comes back, 'the same laws, the same opinions, the same religions'. But taken aback by his own speculation Sigher hastens to add: 'We say this according to the opinion of the philosopher, without affirming that it is true'.[300]

At this point we have again arrived at our starting point. The last words seem to imply that there are two truths, a philosophical truth and a truth of 'faith'. Sigher of Brabant hesitates to accept the first. But his hesitation is heretical, because it seems to incline to the notorious doctrine of 'double truth'. This doctrine is ultimately based upon the philosophical difficulty of how to reconcile God's creation of the world with the world's everlastingness. A similar difficulty - i.e., how to interpret creationistic and theistic passages in *śruti* in the context of Advaita - led Śankara to the doctrines of *parabrahman* and *aparabrahman*, and of *paramārtha* and *vyavahāra*.

The Western reaction to the Advaitic doctrine of two levels, must be understood in relation to this so-called doctrine of double truth, which was criticised and condemned throughout the middle ages. The doctrine might have originated under the influence of early attempts to interpret diffcult passages of the Quran in a figuratie sense. It reached its greatest height in the twelfth century. in *Ibn Rushd*. The latter did not really hold a doctrine of two truths, but divided humanity in three classes: firstly, the greater part of human beings, the masses, which possess blind faith; next the 'elite', which follows reason in a strictly philo-

299 *Mundum incoepisse est credibile, non autiem demonstrabile vel scibile.*
300 Gilson, o.c. 564-565.

ssophical way. A third category of being follows theology, which is an unjustified and abnormal eristic occupation[301] for which *Ibn Rushd* has nothing but contempt. That he did not look upon himself as exclusively belonging to the philosophical class follows from the fact that he wished to remain a good Muslim. He therefore was in a position to hold the following opinion concerning the unity of the active intellect (a traditional Aristotelian problem): 'On account of reason I conclude with necessity, that the intellect is one in number; but notwithstanding that I firmly hold the opposite on account of faith'.[302] Gilson remarks that here reason leads to necessity, but that it is nowhere said that it leads to truth. What the Arab philosopher really thought remains 'hidden in the secret of his conscience'.[303]

After Averroes a school of Averroists arose in Padua whose views were much more unreasonable. According to them there can be two opposite truths concerning one and the same dogmatical problem, one on account of faith and one on account of reason. These two truths are contradictory, but nevertheless valid for every human being.[304] This Averroism was destined to become very unpopular. It explains why the doctrine of 'double truth' did not only become one of the main heresies for the medieval church, but also an inadmissible mistake to all later philosophical thought. This is evident if it is remembered how strong the tradition of the Aristotelian doctrines of the excluded third and contradiction were and to what extent logical as well as existential choice was stressed in the West.[305]

These different doctrines of Averroist origin can be ultimately traced back to Neoplatonism or Platonism (or even Parmenides: see below) and are essentially the same as the Advaitic doctrine of two levels. The difference, namely that Śankara ultimately considered only the one, *parāmāthika* truth, can be explained

301 See L. Gauthier, *Ibn, Rochd* (*Averroes*), Paris 1948, 279; cf. the review by V. van Steenkiste, Tijdschrift voor Philosophie 12 (1950), 323-330.

302 *Per rationem concludo de necessitate, quod intellectus est unus numero, firmiter tamen teneo oppositum per fidem*; ap. Gilson, o.c. 360,

303 *Ibid.*: 'Cachée dans le secret de sa conscience'.-Gauthier does not seem to hold the same view.

304 Gauthier, o.c. 277.

305 See above I. 5.

by the fact that the Roman Catholic church could never tolerate the denunciation of its central doctrine of creation, whereas the less intolerant and less perfectly organized Hindu community could permit one trend of thought in *śruti* being subordinated in one of the Vedāntic systems. To the uncompromising Western mind Śaṅkara is almost only intelligible if the *vyāvahārika aparavidyā* truths are essentially rejected and not compromisingly allowed as possessing a kind of 'relative' truth. The opposition is less unbearable for the Indian mind, for we see authors speaking about the *vyāvahārika* realm as if it were a reality. For the Western mind, it is at first inconceivable that a true Advaitin is a *bhākta* as well - a relatively common situation in India. This might be explained by the unusually synthetical character of the Indian mind.

Islam and Christianity rejected the doctrine of *Ibn Rushd* also for another reason. The truth of the monotheistic religions is intended for everybody, without exception. No esotericism of an elite, posssesing its own higher or ultimate truth, has ever been taken seriously in the monotheistic atmosphere. This is clear from Christ's own teaching and holds for Muhammad as well (despite later mystics who attributed an early Christian or Muslim[306] origin to esoteric doctrines.). For the same reason the ancient Greek democracy of the *Pólis*, the 'city-state', could become the leading political ideology of the Christian West. But against this democratie and 'popular' view of ultimate truth there have always been aristocratic protests from people who wanted to keep truth to themselves and who felt on that account superior to others.[307]

While Islam and Christianity opposed esotericism, the same does neither hold for the latest period of Greek civilization, nor for India. In Plotinus' days esoterical movements were fashionable since confidence in the old religious truths had disappeared and the latter came to be looked upon as popular. The same holds to some extent at present. In India the caste-system is consistent with the idea that spiritual truths are confined to an elite, who

306 The Shī'a claim that their sect possesses a secret revelation, whispered by Muhammad into the ear of 'Alī.

307 Cf. the article quoted above, III. 5: 204, n. 221.

must preserve the tradition (as a necessary in a circular view of time). This privileged class, consists of Brahmans who are entitled to study the Vedas. This situation, explained (away) by the doctrine of *karman*, was often openly denounced, e.g., in the *Bhāgavata*: 'One becomes a Brāhmana by his deeds and not by his family or birth; even a Caṇḍāla is a Brāhmaṇa, if he is of pure character.'[308] In Advaita everyone can take *saṁnyāsa* and realise Brakman.

This is connected with the fact that Advaita started as a sect and took its followers from different castes. While the caste system is tolerant with regard to doctrines which caste members wish to adopt, it is exclusive as regards the people who can be admitted. This situation is reversed in the sects. A sect is open to all castes but intolerant with regard to doctrines.[309] In Advaita exclusiveness of caste is replaced by an exclusiveness of doctrine expressed in the view that only the liberated soul attains *paravidyā* while the others do not go beyond *aparavidyā*. The truth is confined to an elite. In the *Gītā*, a similar view is expressed.[310] In later Advaita considerations of caste re-appear and the system becomes the traditional philosophy of a subcaste of South Indian Brahmans, the Aiyars.[311] This does not prevent others from adopting the philosophy of Advaita. The Śaṅkarā. cārya of the Śṛṅgeri Maṭha is at the same time the head of orthodox Aiyar Brahmans and a *saṁnyāsin* who gives spiritual counsel and teaches all who are interested in Advaita.

By incorporating the *vyāvahārika* realm Śaṅkara aceepted the relative validity of the caste system. We do not have much information about the attitude to caste in early Advaita, but Śaṅkara states in the great commentary,[312] that *śūdras* are not allowed to

308 Cf. Mahadevan, *Outlines of Hinduism*, 72.
309 See L. Dumont, World *renunciation in Indian religions*. Contributions to Indian sociology 4 (1960) 33-62. Cf. J.F. Staal in: Journal of the American Oriental Society 81 (1961) 147-9.
310 7.3: 'Among thousands of men only one strives for perfection, Even of those who strive and are perfected only one knows me in truth'.
311 Cf. J.F. Staal, *Notes on some Brahmin communities of South India*. Art and Letters. Journal of the Royal India Pakistan and Ceylon Society 32 (1958) 1-7.
312 *BSB*. 1.3.38.

study the Vedas. The legend of Śiva appearing before him disguised as a Caṇḍāla must be of later origin.[313]

The above considerations suggest relationships, not causes, and do not lead to historical-materialistic explanations. One cannot explain a doctrine of higher and lower truth as the ideology of an intellectual or spiritual minority which wants to gain power and supremacy. There are purely metaphysical reasons for this doctrine so that it is likely that the social situation is a reflection of another reality. This can be made plausible by lastly considering one Greek pbilosopher, in whose doctrine the two-level theory stands out very clearly and who is as such the precursor of all similar theories in the West: i.e., Parmenides.[314]

Parmenides' famous poem consisted of two parts: the first dealing with truth, the second with *dóxa*, 'appearance', 'opinion'. The significance of this second part has been variously interpreted, but increasingly in a manner by which it becomes comparable to the Advaita *vyāvahārika* level. Diels originally held it to contain an enumeration of cosmologies alien to Parmenides' own views. Von Wilamowitz and Kranz considered it a probable hypothesis about the origin of the world.[315] Reinhardt however[316] has convincingly refuted these two theories and has shown that the second part of Parmenides' poem explains the origin of the illusory world of appearance (*dóxa*) and the origin of the erroneous opinions (*dóxai*) of the mortals about it at the same time and unseparated. Verdenius has in particular shown that the world of *dóxa* is a world of lower level, to which a lower and only relative knowledge corresponds.

This is in all probability the oldest form in which the two level theory was known in Europe.

8. *Freedom*

The concept of freedom is central also in Neoplatonism. As one of the best Plotinus scholars, P. Henry, devoted a series of

313 *Maniṣapañcaka*. Cf. Belvalkar *op. cit*, 237.
314 Cf. the author's *Parmenides and Indian thought*, 85, 93.
315 Cf. the *Timaeus*.
316 In: *Permenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie*.

three articles to his question,[317] we shall first restate some of his conclusions in the present context.

Plotinus calls the individual soul free (*eleutliéra*) when it is 'master of itself' (*kuriōtátē hautēs*), 'separated from the body' (*àneu sōmatos*) and 'outside all cosmical causality' (*kosmikēs aitías éxō*).[318] This is the kind of freedom which Śaṅkara calls *mokṣa* or release from the 'cosmic causality' of *karman*, whether separated from the body (*videhamukti*) or 'while embodieḍ' (*jīvanmukti*). Plotinus speaks about the latter possibility as one admitting a less high degree of freedom,[319] but he does not denounce it as for instance Rāmānuja did.

The freedom of release or *mokṣa* is different from our own and typically human freedom; i.e., the freedom of choice. In Advaita, in the *vyāvahārika* realm souls are free to act and create good or bad *karma*. In Neoplatonism, Plotinus believed that man is free; this is shown by Henry.[320] But Plato had taught that evil is involuntary. Therefore Plotinus concludes, in the form of a syllogism from the premises 'we are free' and 'we do not choose evil freely' that 'we choose the good freely'.[321] Whenever we are free we choose the good. When we choose between a good and a bad possibility, we can choose the good freely, but not the bad. But this can only mean that the choice itself is not free. Freedom of choice is therefore for Plotinus a lower freedom. In the highest freedom one is no longer able to choose: 'the ability to choose between opposites (*antikeímena*) denotes an inability to remain on the most perfect level'.[322] By rejecting choice and preferring divine perfection, Plotinus rejects limitation (which is inherent in choice) and prefers the unlimited (which is also here the potentially unlimited).[323]

This most perfect level is a divine level and human freedom does not occur there. Human freedom exists only when there is

317 P. Henry, *La problème de la liberté chez Plotin*, Revue néoscolastique de philosophie 33 (1931) 50-79; 180-215; 318-339.
318 III. 1.8. 9-10.
319 Ibid., 11.
320 o.c., 210.
321 o.c. 214.
322 VI. 8.21. 5-7 ap. Henry, o.c. 324, 335. Henry says; 'Ils sont rares les penseurs qui atteignent ces sommets'.
323 Cf. above III. 3.

also a possibility of choosing evil. The above divine freedom, which is according to Plotinus the human goal, therefore deifies man and makes him perfect, but takes his human freedom of choice away. This is in accordance with the fact that for many of the ancient Greeks the Gods were blessed, blissful (the *mákares theoí* of Homer), but subject to Fate (*Moîra*) and to Necessity (*Anágkē*); whereas man can choose freely, but is subject to pleasure and pain, to bliss and misfortune. Goethe described the ancient idea of man and his relation to the divine as follows:

> 'The infinite Gods give everything,
> To their favourites unreservedly.
> All joys infinite,
> All pains infinite,
> Unreservedly'.[324]

The Neoplatonic idea of the deification and perfection of man reverses this tradition and takes man's freedom of choice away; it bestows in its place upon him divine bliss. The same holds for the *jīvanmukta*, who has attained the status of *Īśvara*: he acts in accordance with the good, automatically and freely in as far as this means 'perfectly'. But he is not free to act either according to the good or according to evil: he does not possess the freedom of choice. The latter holds in Advaita only for the soul who is in bondage, the *saṁsārī*: he can freely act in the right or wrong way. For that reason he is in bondage.

There are several difficulties underlying these ideas. If the individual soul is free to choose also evil and if this choice is real, the evil choice must be as real as the right choice and thus evil itself as real as good. Alternatively if choice is really free, something entirely new and not previously determined or even expected may come into being. In both cases, the universe cannot be a unity in the sense of a *plenum*, a *plērés*, a *pūrnam*. While divine freedom or the freedom of *mokṣa*, which is the same for all who have realized it, does not affect the unity of the universe, freedom of choice for each individual destroys the unity and continuity of the whole. Philosophers who accept individual freedom are therefore generally pluralists. Does this imply that Advaita and

324 These lines form a kind of *Leitmotiv* in the novel of Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus*.

Neoplatonism cannot explain human freedom, despite the fact that they accept its existence?

In the case of Advaita the answer can be easily given. (1) In the *vyāvahārika* realm human freedom exists and if this contradicts the unity and plenitude of the universe, this is only interpreted as one of the manifestations of the *anirvacanīyatva* of this world: this *dūṣana* is a *bhūṣana*. (2) In the *pāramārthika* realm human freedom does not exist, not in the sense that there would be determinism, but in the sense that separate individuality does not exist so that the problem vanishes.

In the case of Plotinus the solution is less conspicuous. He is well aware of the dangerous consequences of the determinism of a unified universe, i.e., abolition of human freedom. If one principle, says he, would connect everything or if everything were guided by one universal soul, and if also the effect of each cause were predetermined, freedom would be 'a mere word' (*ónoma mónon*).[325] Plotinus is anxious to preserve reality, when it is in danger of becoming a 'mere word', whereas Śaṅkara denounces it exactly because it is 'a mere word' (*nāma eva*). But for Plotinus it becomes difficult to explain freedom when at the same time he aims at maintaining the unity of being. If choice of evil is involuntary human freedom is inexplicable.

Despite these 'technical' difficulties the existential intention of both Plotinus and Śaṅkara is clear: it is to transcend the level of human freedom and to go beyond to the divine perfection, where choice of an evil possibility is no longer realizable. This is at the same time good (*agathón*) and bliss (*ānanda*), but not the pleasure of heaven, for pleasure is linked up with pain and belongs to the realm of human choice and *karman*. Thus there is accord in interpretation, but difrerence in evaluation, between the traditional Greek view on the one hand and the Neoplatonic and Advaitic view on the other. In the first, human being accepts pleasure and is free, but has to accept pain and is neither perfect nor blessed; in the second human being sacrifices his personal freedom and pleasures, thereby conquering all possible suffering as well, and thus becomes perfect and blissful. The last solution was

325 III. 1.7.15.

clearly presented by the Buddha as the means for abolishing suffering: who does not want to suffer, has to sacrifice pleasure.

The modern concept of freedom is different from Plotinus' concept of freedom. The former is essentially a freedom of the human personality and individuality, the latter a state of perfection which is divine and which is in fact the same as the freedom of the One. The several denotations of the concept of divine freedom in Plotinus have been enumerated by Henry.[326] They are: not being subject to contingency or change; absence of (external) force; transcendence; power over itself (but not power to choose); being for itself; omnipotence (but inability to choose evil); selfcreativity.

Henry has also pointed out that there is no freedom of creation for the Plotinian divine.[327] The One produces according to its will. But this will is reasonable, leaves nothing to chance and is even necessary: the production takes place 'as it ought to be' (*hōs édei*). Thus the will of the One is no free will in the usual sense and can hardly be called a will. Similarly *Īśvara* does not freely act when creating a new universe, but is led by the (subtle forms of) good and bad *karman* of a previous universe. This is in accordance with the fact that creation has a very subordinate place in Neoplatonism as well as in Advaita.

Modern Western consciousness stresses free creativity in consequence of the monotheistic idea of a God, who created once at a special time according to his will and pleasure. In the monotheistic religions divine freedom always assumed a certain kind of arbitrariness inaccessible to reasoning and the rational expectations of mankind. This God decided the time and place where he wished to reveal himself, preferred (according to some) one race to others or forgave according to others the sins of some while condernning others.

Such an unreasonable divine personality would be a strange and troublesome body in the well ordered systems of Advaita and Neoplatonism - and this holds for human freedom too: for while it is unexplained by Neoplatonism, it is inexplicable according to Advaita.

326 o.c. 336.
327 o.c. 338-339.

Conclusion

Although there are many other philosophical problems connected with Advaita and Neoplatonism, the main and characteristic trends of thought in both systems have been considered here. Undoubtedly both philosophies have much in common and many of their differences result from the different traditions from which each arose and to which each belongs. The main trend of thought of each of these philosophies is the secondary trend in the other. The main Neoplatonic theme is that there is a hierarchy of being, at the summit of which is the One, the most perfect and highly evaluated entity. In Plotinus there is also a tendency which stresses the perfection of the One to such a degree that the rest of the universe is nothing in comparison with it. In Advaita, on the other hand, the main tendency is to absolutely and uncompromisingly deny the reality of anything apart from the absolute Brahman. Here the complementary tendency is the acceptance of a *vyāvahārika* realm, which is, as *avidyā* itself, neither real nor unreal but *anirvacanīya*. It actually plays a very important role both in the theory and practice of Advaita. Therefore Neoplatonism is the more world-negating and Advaita the more worldaffirming of the two.

The historical success of Advaita lies more in its acceptance of the *vyāvahārika* realm including all philosophical and religious views as well as ritual and social practices, than in its teaching the non-dual Absolute with which the soul is essentially and eternally identical. This practical and synthesizing tendency of Advaita also explains its present claim of being a philosophy opposed to no other system of thought and therefore in the present age a solution for conflicting world views.

However below the surface of this universalistic outlook the purely philosophical genius of Śaṅkara continues to live. He conceived the idea of the *nirguṇa brahman*, which is our own self but which cannot be reached by any active effort. It can only be suddenly realized as eternally existing with the disappearance of *avidyā* which is responsible for our belief in our own and in a divine personality. To the West this doctrine implies in the first

place impersonalism. But impersonalism existed in Western thought in many forms. Among these Neoplatonism was the most highly developed and came closest to Advaita. This impersonalist tradition was a recurrent reaction against the characteristic personalism of the West which rejected and condemned the former repeatedly. This personalism, together with its kindred anthropocentrism (even Christianity is at least as anthropocentric as it is theocentric), tended consistenly to evaluate the personal more highly than the impersonal. Such personalism is misunderstood when it is subordinated as an aspect, level, or possibility within an impersonalist synthesis. What is most unintelligible to the impersonalist is precisely that the idea of the personal excludes the possibility of a superior impersonal above it. Both personalism and impersonalism consider real what they evaluate most highly.

A modern form of Neoplatonism in the West is the reaction against religious personalism, expressed as the loss of belief in a personal God. According to many contemporary Westerners the monotheistic personal God contradicts much that is valued as rationalism and progress. In the West this amounts to atheism, while in India it would be consistent with Advaita. This explains the spread of Advaita and especially of Buddhism in Western countries. In these Western adaptations attention is confined to the *pāramārthika* realm, since the *vyāvahārika* realm is more closely connected with purely Indian developments. But such adaptations are bound to fail unless it is realized that in Advaita not only is the divine personality devaluated, but also the human personality. If Western atheism implies the absence of belief in both human and divine personalities it can go along with Advaita. But if the divine personality is rejected, while the human personality is retained, the result is inconsistent with Advaita.

Thus the West will be disappointed if it expects to lose itself and its personal difficulties in Advaitic impersonalism. On the contrary, Advaita will show the West its true self. It teaches again the old Greek admonition: *Gnōthi seautón*, Know thyself. With Advaita the West may also learn that self-knowledge is more important and essential than any *karman*.

In a simple conversation one of the most representative Advaitins of this century, the 34th Jagadguru of the Śṛṅgeri *Pīṭha*, Chandraśekhara Bhāratī Swāmigal, has told the West that it need

not adopt Advaita, but realize self-knowledge, the most profound aim of Advaita itself.

‘Why must it be’, impatiently demanded an earnest American tourist, ‘that you will not convert other peoples to Hinduism? You have such a beautiful religion, and yet you keep so many struggling souls out of it. If you say “yes” I will be the first to become a Hindu’.

‘But why’, came the counter-question, ‘do you want to change your religion? What is wrong with Christianity?’

Taken aback, but not daunted, the tourist said, ‘I cannot say what is wrong, but it has not given me satisfaction’.

‘Indeed, it is unfortunate’, was the reply, ‘but tell me honestly whether you have given it a real chance. Have you fully understood the religion of Christ and lived according to it? Have you been a true Christian and yet found the religion wanting?’

‘I am afraid I cannot say that, Sir’.

‘Then we advise you to go and be a true Christian first; live truly by the word of the Lord, and even if then you feel unfulfilled, it will be time to consider what should be done’.[1]

The self-knowledge which the Ācārya recommends need not only apply in a religious context but has a universal philosophical connotation. Advaita encourages us to understand ourselves. If studied in a comparative spirit it increases the awareness of one's own habits of thought and thereby paves the way for an adequate understanding of other types of thought.

1 *Dialogues of the guru*, Chap. I. Also quoted in Mahadevan, *Outlines of Hinduism* 296-7.

Appendix
The problem of Indian Influence on Neoplatonism

According to Porphyry, Plotinus once ‘sought to learn directly the philosophy practised among the Persians and that which is held in esteem among the people of India’.[1] The theory that some aspect of Neoplatonism was infruenced by ‘Indian thought’, has repeatedly been discussed and has found many learned advocates and opponents. As it seems that research on the subject has been done while scholars were unaware of the fact that the same subject was dealt with by others, we propose to contribute to a possible solution of the problem by giving a critical review of the existing literature in chronological order. In this way one can easily see what are the main arguments which can be brought forward, and which of these have been refuted. Of the work done before Bréhier's book of 1938 mention is made only of the article by Müller of 1914; after 1938, we hope that our enumeration is complete as far as articles which deal principally with the subject are concerned. Casual references in monographs touching upon the subject have not been discussed.

Critical remarks are based upon the methodological considerations mentioned in the first part[2] and the method which has been formulated by Koster in dealing with the problem of Oriental influence on Plato; we need only read Plotinus where he says Plato: ‘There is only one method which leads to an adequate understanding of the doctrine of Plato. This is the method requiring the commentator when interpreting a passage first to ask whether this passage can be explained by what Plato teaches elsewhere or by what he taught previously; next whether the same can be done with the help of what is left of nis Greek predecessors; and lastly whether the interpreter has not forgotten to take the creative imagination and the personal logic of his author into account; this last consideration is not the least important. In short,

1 *Vita Plotini* 3, 15-17.
2 See above I, 6: 22-4.

he has to deal with Plato as with Homer: explain him by himself. The person who studies Plato has to be led by one rule: first of all *tòn Plátōna ed toû Plátōnos saphēnízein*.[3]

H.K. *Müller, Orientalisches bei Plotinos*? Hermes 49 (1914) 70-80.

The author has convincingly shown that Plotinus is not influenced by the Oriental cults and creeds which were current in the Roman empire during the third century, Plotinus disagrees with the idea of salvation through an intermediary and objects to widespread forms of ordinary devotion.

With this article the thesis of Iranian influence seems refuted, but the possibility of Indian influence remains. One more article has been written since then arguing an influence from Iran: M. Techert, *Iranische religiöse Elemente in dem Begriff der Psuche bei Plotin*, Egyetemes Philologiai Közlöny 53 (1929) 65-160. The author says that the idea of the fall of the soul is typically Iranian. For a discussion of this topic refer to the review of the article by Szabó, below p. 354.

E. Bréhier, *La phitosophie de Plotin*, Paris 1938, chapitre VII: *L'orientalisme de Plotin*, 107-133.

A.N. Armstrong, *Plotinus and India*, Classical Quarterly 30 (1936) 22-28.

Almost none of the (mainly French) scholars who based their investigations upon the famous thesis of Bréhier seem to know that the main points made by Bréhier were convincingly refuted by Armstrong. We have therefore grouped the two together.

Armstrong correctly summarized the main arguments for Bréhier's thesis that Plotinus must have undergone influence from Indian thought and particularly from the Upaniṣads, as follows. There are two elements in Plotinus which cannot be explained against the Greek background: (1) the infinity of the One and of the intelligible world, which contradicts the traditional Greek, rationalistic idea of the world as a closed and well defined cosmos;

3 W.J.W. Koster, *Le mythe de Platon, de Zarathoustra et des Chaldéens, Etude critique sur les relations intellectuelles entre Platon et l'Orīnt*, Leiden 1951. 84.

(2) the absence of a clear distinction and separation of the individual ego from the divine principle, connected with the identification of subject and object in the level of the *nous*. Both doctrines occur in the Upaniṣads. Influence, which is on historical grounds possible, is therefore likely.

Armstrong has criticised these arguments as follows:

(1) (a) Anaximander's principle of everything was already called *ápeiron*, 'the in(de)finite'.

(b) Heraclitus deals with this topic in the following fragment: 'You will not be able to find the boundaries (*peírata*) of the soul, whatever way you go; such a deep *lógos* she has', - 'Here we have something remarkably like the infinite self of Plotinus'.

(c) In V.7. 3 the infinity of the intelligible world is connected with the doctrine that there are also forms of individuals. This is related to the individualism of the Stoa.

(2) (a) The Pre-Socratics did not attribute clear-cut boundaries to the soul.

(b) In the *noûs khōristós* of Aristotle (*De Anima* III 5) and in the *daímōn ektòs ōn* of Plutarch (*De genio Socratis* 591 e) the idea is expressed that the highest part of the human soul is independent, supra-personal and identical for all human beings.

Armstrong's arguments may be accepted and can be supplemented by the following.

Ad (1) Also the Eleatic philosopher Melissos calls being *ápeiron* (Diels 20 A 14.2.3) and Anaxagoras calls his principle, the *noûs, ápeiron* (Diels 46 B 12). Moreover while the idea of cosmos is a traditionally Greek idea, this applies also to the idea of chaos (e.g. Hesiodus, *Theogonia* 116 and 123). Since the cosmos develops out of chaos, the latter concept, could very well lead to the philosophical idea of a primordial infinite, which may not have been evaluated highly, but nevertheless regarded as divine. Lastly, we may note that the Upaniṣadic infinite is actual

while the Neoplatonic is potential[4] as is foreshadowed in the fragment of Heraclitus quoted by Armstrong.

Ad (2) Pure reasoning, in Advaita as well as in Neoplatonism, leads from the assumption of non-dual reality and from the rejection of the reality of change to the thesis, that our own self cannot transform into the Absolute, but is identical with it.

The same two authors expressed a number of years later again their opinion with regard to the same subject. Bréhier is less definite, but Armstrong has retained his view. Armstrong adds that the doctrine of divine infinity is alien to Plato, but this does not affect his former arguments. The statements are as follows:

During a meeting in Paris in 1948 Jean Baruzi asked Bréhier whether he retained his opinion of 1938. The latter answered: 'I put forward the question. I could not answer it. I thought at the time that it might interest those who deal with India. I have found a number of very definite relations between the Neoplatonists and India. But I have found nobody who is interested and the problem remains to be studied'.[5]

Armstrong wrote in 1958: 'Plotinus ....never in fact established any sort of contact with Eastern thinkers; and there is no good evidence, internal or external, to show that he ever acquired any knowledge of Indian philosophy.'[6] And concerning the relation with Plato: 'But the placing of the ideas in the Divine mind, the emphasis on life and the organic view of reality, the doctrine that there are ideas of individuals, and the doctrine of the Divine Infinity, all seem to belong to ways of thinking quite different from Plato's... '[7] The forms were first conceived as divine thoughts by Philo of Alexandria and this innovation, which was fruitful for medieval thought, occurs again in Albinus. The empha-

4 See above III. 3.

5 'J'ai posé la question. Je n'ai pas pu la résoudre. Je pensais à ce moment-là que cela pouvait intéresser ceux qui s'occupent de L'Inde. J'ai trouvé nombre de relations très certaines entre les neoplatoniciens et l'Inde. Mais je n'ai trouvé personne que cela intéresse, et la question reste à étudier; E. Bréhier, in Etudes Bergsoniennes II, Paris 1949; *Images plotiniennes images bergsoniennes*, 105-128, 215-222; 223.

6 A.H. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, London, 1953, 13.

7 Id. 22.

sis on life and the organic view of reality may be related to the Stoa and does at any rate not remind us of India. The doctrine that there are ideas of individuals is related to Stoic individualism, as Armstrong has pointed out himself. The above arguments remain valid with regard to divine infinity.

J. Przyluski, *Les trois hypostases dans l'Inde et à Alexandria* Mélanges Cumont II, Bruxelles 1936, 925-933.

The author argues that there is an analogy between; (1) the three hypostases of Plotinus; (2) the three bodies of the Buddha; (3) trinitary Christologies in Gnosticism; (4) the Christian trinity. As there are possibilities of historical contact, several influences have to be assumed.

The article proves little and is very unconvincing. Not even the similarities, which are referred to, exist. In the Gnosis and in Buddhism the middle entity is an intermediary between human and divine. But it is characteristic for Plotinus that he rejects any such intermediaries.[8] Moreover with regard to Buddhism there is a chronological difficulty: though, according to de la Vallée Poussin, the germs of a doctrine of three bodies exist already in Theravāda, a definite trinity is, according to Suzuki, available only since Asaṅga (i.e., according to Jacobi,[9] during the middle of the IVth century A.D.)[10] The analogy between the three hypostases and the Christian trinity is superficial, though it was noticed amongst some early Christians[11] (even the Cambridge Platonist Cudworth spoke about 'The Trinity of Plato')[12] and though it was again defended by Pistorius.[13] We have refuted this thesis elsewhere.[14]

J. Przyluski, *Indian influence on Western thought before and during the third century A.D.*, Journal of the Greater Indian Society I.

8 Bréhier, *Philosophie de Plotin*, 113 sq.
9 See S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, London - New York 1931, II, 36, note.
10 Renou-Filliozat, *L'Inde classique* II, 566-567.
11 See Inge, *Philosophy of Plotinus* I, 210-211.
12 See the article of de Vogel, quoted below 247, 44, n. 3.
13 *Plotinus and Neoplatonism*, Cambridge 1953.
14 In: Algemeen Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Wijsbegeerte en Psychologie 46 (1953) 48-51.

A.B. Keith, *Plotinus and Indian thought*, Indian Culture 2 (1935-1936), 125-130.

These two articles are again grouped together, as the first is refuted by the second. Przyluski presents two new arguments: (1) the influence must have taken place through the examples of Indians, e.g., the impassibility of Indian ascetics or their suicide by voluntarily ascending the funeral pile; (2) Indian influence must have been transmitted through Mani, who was in India, and Manicheism.

Keith has convincingly refuted these arguments as follows; (1) the Greek contemporary explanations of these phenomena do not at all entitle us to think that they were philosophically interpreted in a Neoplatonic sense; (2) (*a*) the doctrines of Mani are dualistic and Przyluski would have to assume that in order to reject them the 'luminous spirit (of Plotinus) was able to separate the dualistic tenets and to retain only the mysticism, peculiarly Indian'. This assumption is very improbable and it is difficult to believe that a monistic tradition influences through a dualistic tradition another philosophy which has very strong monistic tenets. (*b*) Moreover, there are chronological difficulties. Instead of summarizing Keith's calculations, we may refer to the opinion of one of the foremost scholars on Manicheism: 'It seems impossible that Manicheism could have reached Egypt before 244, at the earliest'.[15] But Plotinus left Alexandria for Rome in the same year, 244 (and not in 248 as Keith says), and we may ask with Keith why he did not remain in the East 'in order to be in touch with the new religion of which he is supposed to have learnt while in Egypt'. (*c*) Mani went to India in order to preach, not in order to study Indian thought.

A. Szabó, *Indische Elemente in Plotinischen Neuplatonismus*, Scholastik 13 (1938), 57-96.

This article has no connection with any of the others and is based on an independent train of thought. It is interesting in so far as it takes up another aspect of Plotinus' metaphysics and relates it to another system of Indian thought. This may show that

15 H.-Ch. Puech, *Le manichéisme*, Paris 1949, 134, n. 191.

the Western mind anyhow associates Neoplatonism with Oriental thought.

According to the author, there is no fall of the soul in Plotinus, but the soul sends an image (*eídōlon*) of itself into the material world and its 'return' is the disappearance of this image. 'Thus the qualitative change of the soul is replaced by an appearance and its fall by an illusion about its essence' (cf. I 1.12). This contradicts the traditional Greek concepts of the fall of the soul (Pythagoreans; Empedocles, Heraclitus, Plato; mysteries). The same idea occurs in the Sāṁkhya system, in which there is an essential difference between matter and soul and where there is no change of the soul but a mixture (*saṁyoga; míxis*) of soul and matter.

This thesis will be discussed under three headings: (1) the interpretation of Plotinus; (2) the traditional Greek view; (3) the chronology of the Sāṁkhya system.

(1) It is true that the soul does not 'fall' according to Plotinus. But the reason is that the soul is a divine entity and therefore not subject to change. It is also true that it can be called a mixture between the *nous* and the *húlē*, between being and non-being. But the latter two entities are not mutally independent, and Plotinus was certainly not a dualist.[16] Lastly, the occurrence of ideas like an image, appearance or illusion result from the character of the *húlē*, which is non-being and privation. This results in turn from the desire to avoid dualism. Thus Plotinus can be easily explained by Plotinus. We will nevertheless consider the other points.

(2) The doctrine of the fall of the soul is, for instance in Plato, not a philosophical doctrine but a mythological way of expression and a popular image[17] - unlike, for example the Christian metaphysical doctrine of the fall of man. The philosophical doctrine of Plato concerning the soul, on the other hand, deals with the different parts of the soul, as introduced in the *Republic*.[18] In the *Timaeus*, 'the intellect', which is of divine origin, is opposed to the body as well as to the lower parts of the soul. The body, in which it penetrates, is for the soul a prison, a place of exile, or a

16 See above, III, 4: 191. sq.
17 e.g., *Phadrus* 246 a; *Phaedo* 61 e.
18 Cf. L. Robin, *La pensée grecque*, Paris 1928, 236.

‘vehicle, which transports the soul but is separate from it.’[19] Moreover, the Pythagoreans already spoke of a rational (*logikón*) and an irrational (*álogon*) part of the soul.[20] Analogous views occur in Aristotle. Thus traditional Greek doctrines are closely related to Plotinus' ideas.

(3) For Sāṁkhya, Szabó refers to two texts; ‘Vacaspati Misra Karika’ and ‘Sūtra’. But these texts are both later than Plotinus: the first the *Sāṁkhyatattvakaumudī* of Vācaspati Miśra is a commentary of the IXth century upon the *Sāṁkhyakārikā* of the IVth century. The second, the *Sāṁkhyasūtra*, cannot be older than the Xth century and was even attributed to the XVth century by Garbe.[21] We would therefore have to assume that the doctrines which are expressed in these works, are much older- which is of course possible as Sāṁkhya is a very old system. But we do not know how Plotinus could have known these earlier doctrines.

Thus Szabó's thesis is unconvincing for three independent reasons.

J. Filliozat, Book-review of: A.J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* I, Paris 1944. Journal Asiatique 234 (1943-1945), 349-354.

With Filliozat we enter a new phase of research on the early relations between India and Greece, where standards of scholarship are higher, statements more definite and precise and where the need for proof is more recognized. Filliozat and several other contemporary scholars in France provide a refutation for Bréhier's surprising statement of 1948, that he could not find anybody who was interested in the relations between Neoplatonism and Indian thought.

The present book-review, especially of the second chapter of Festugière's book, entitled ‘*Les prophètes de l'orient*’, is not especially concerned with Neoplatonism but is interesting in as far as it gives a survey of several detailed similarities between Greek and Indian phenomena which were recently discovered. In

19 *Timée*, ed. et trad. A Rivand, Paris 1949, *Notice* 93,
20 H. Diels, *Doxograph graeci*, Berlin 1879, 389 sq,
21 Renou-Filliozat, *L'Inde classique* II, 36-37.

several cases familiarity of the Greeks with Indian culture is apparent.

Firstly elements of Vedic origin seems traceable in Philostratus' *Life of Appolonius of Tyana*: there is a reference to the *aśvamedha*[22] and reference to Vedic rites and to yogic powers.[23] The duration of Heraclitus 'great year' according to Consorimus, 10.8 years, is a decimal fraction of the result of Indian calculations. The Hippocratical treatise '*On winds*' resembles the more ancient Indian doctrine of *prāṇa*. A medical theory in Plato's *Timaeus* resembles Indian medical theories. It should be observed, that these last cases have to be studied much more closely before they can be called decisive.

Concerning the probability of actual communications, the author rightly points to the fact that the Persian empire comprised, during the Achaemenids (a period during which many Greek as well as Indian doctrines originated), the Panjab and the Indus Valley, whereas many Greeks lived in the empire, which was governed, from the Nile to the Indus, by one class of Aramaic speaking administrators. Moreover actual meetings have been recorded between Greeks and Indians.[24]

We may conclude from this survey that there were actual contacts between Greece and India, before and during the third century. This need not imply that Plotinus was influenced by Indian thought. We come much nearer to this problem, however, with the help of the following very important and interesting article of the same author.

J. Filliozat, *La doctrine des brahmanes d'apres saint Hippolyte*, Revue de l'Histoire des Religions 130 (1945) 59-91 (announced in: Journal Asiatique 234 (1943-1945) 451).

Shortly before 324 A.D., i.e. at least ten years before Plotinus came to Rome, the Christian saint Hippolytus wrote his *Refutation*

22 R. Goossens, *Un texte grec relatif a l'aśvamedha*, Journal Asiatique (1930) 280.
23 P. Meile, *Appolonius de Tyane et les rites védiques*, Journal Asiatique 234, (1943-1945), 451.
24 R. Festugière, *Trois rencontres entre la Grèce et l'Inde*, Revue de l'Histoire des Religions 125 (1942-1943), 32-57; 130 (1945) 29-41.

of all heresies in which some passages are devoted to the ‘Brahmanas’ amongst the Indians. Filliozat has shown that these passages presuppose a quite detailed knowledge of Upaniṣadic doctrines as expounded in the *Maitri Upaniṣad*. This knowledge cannot result from records of companions or historians of Alexander the Great, as there is an unambiguous reference to South India: the Brahmanas are said to drink the water of the river ‘Tagabena’ which must be identified with the river Tuṅgaveṇā mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* and which is no other than the Tunga. Since Śṛṅgeri is the only well known holy spot on the banks of this river, it may have been a place of importance long before Śaṅkara, who according to tradition founded his first *maṭha* there.

The argument of Filliozat is rich in information and suggestions and cannot be easily summarized. We will therefore discuss only those passages of Hippolytus' work referring to philosophical ideas which occur in Plotinus as well as in the Upaniṣads, or which seem to occur in both traditions. We should not suppose, however, that Plotinus could have known about Upaniṣadic thought only from Hippolytus' notice: for it is too short and lacunary. But it is certainly possible that he knew the source from which Hippolytus collected his information. Since this source is lost, we have to confine ourselves to Hippolytus' record.

According to Hippolytus, the God of the Brahmanas is ‘not the articulated, but the one of the knowledge (*gnōsis*)’ and ’the Brahmanas say, that only they know it, because only they have rejected the vain opinion (*kenodoxía*) which is the last garment (*khiton*) of the soul’. Filliozat has convincingly argued that the reference to the ‘God’ of the Brahmanas, can only refer to Brahman, which is the metaphysical counterpart of the Christian God. That Brahman is knowledge is a widespread doctrine in the Upaniṣads. But we have to note that the term *gnosis*, characteristic for the Gnostics and probably for the Corpus Areopagiticum, is not preponderant in Plotinus. More specific in the reference to ‘vain opinion’ and Filliozat reminds. us of Upaniṣadic passages, where the view that the Self is the body, is rejected; the body is only a sheath (*kośa*) of the Self. This points in two directions:

(1) *Kenodoxía* is the same as *abhimāna* ‘delusion’. Filliozat has defended the view that the Greek term actually goes back to

this Indian term. It is interesting to observe that the Greek *dóxa*, e.g. in Parmenides and since in Plato and Plotinus, has almost the same philosophical significance as the Sanskrit *avidyā* which is again the same as *abhimāna*. (2) The several sheaths (*kośas*) which cover the Self form a well-known topic of the Upaniṣads, especially of the *Taittirīya*. The *Maitri Upaniṣad* stresses that we have to destroy our *abhimāna* and get rid of the sheaths hiding the Self. Though the latter idea does not occur in Plotinus, it is interesting to note that it is connected with the doctrine of *abhimāna*, which does exist in Plotinus as *dóxa*. The fact that it plays in *Parmenides* a more important roie than in Plotinus shows that it is superflous to assume Upaniṣadic influence on Plotinus in this respect. But there can have been a concordance of influences and it is possible that Plotinus discovered Indian confirmation of the ancient Greek legacy. He may also have come to a somewhat Indianizing interpretation of the lacunary expression of Parmenides.

There are other examples, e.g. that according to Hippolytus the Brahmanas described the divine as the sun. We need not argue that Plotinus might have taken this from the same source, since this comparison is familiar to all readers of Plato.

Filliozat is right in stressing that a Roman of the third century interested in India, e.g., Plotinus, could have a quite detailed and not inadequate knowledge of Upaniṣadic doctrines. However before we can speak of a definite influence of Upaniṣadic doctrines upon Plotinus, we must first show that certain features cannot be traced back to Greek sources. This does not seem to be so.

This leads again to a consideration of the Greek background of Plotinus' thought. Moreover the susceptibility to undergo influence has to be explained with the help of the Greek background. In this context Festugière has shown, as Filliozat mentions (in the above book-review), that the interest in the Orient since the second century has to be explained against the background of the decline of Greek rationalism, which is an internal development of the Greek tradition. But Filliozat is right in stressing that any Oriental influence would be impossible without adequate information.

O. Lacombe, *A note on Plotinus and Indian thought*, Silver Jubilee Commemoration volume of the Indian Philosophical Con-

gress, II, Calcutta 1950, 45-54 (a French version was published during the same year in Paris).

The starting point of this study is the research of Filliozat. The author remarks rightly that, if knowledge of Indian thought was as accurate in Rome as Filliozat has shown, it must have been at least as good in Alexandria. But he unfortunately follows Bréhier in making the wrong assumption that ‘the section of Plotinus’ thought which suggests a relationship with Vedāntic Brahmanism is the very section which cannot be easily explained on the basis of the pure philosophical tradition of Hellenism’. Accordingly, Lacombe exaggerates the importance of the Advaitic trend in Plotinus' thought, which we have characterised as a contrary tendency. Similarly, he regards the infinite of Plotinus as an actual infinite like the Upaniṣadic plenitude. Combining those ‘intrinsic similarities’ with the results of Filliozat's studies, he comes to the following conclusion: ‘Plotinus stands at the junction of two currents of influence-Greek and Indian’. That this is an exaggeration is clear in the light of the above.

But the author himself also does not interpret this conclusion literally: he describes later the Indian influence as ‘only slight’ and as a ‘stimulus, leading to independent development and the active assimilation of a new contribution in accord with the fundamental assumptions of the thinker subject to the “influence”.’ Such a kind of influence cannot be excluded, even if it cannot be proved.

Lastly the author makes an important remark, which is not correct but which points to a fact which future research on the question of Indian influence on Plotinus will have to consider: ‘Lastly, it should be remembered that, to a very large extent, the history of Hellenistic philosophy in the period immediately before Plotinus has still to be written, and our ignorance of that matter may account for the difficulty we find in bridging the spiritual gap between the *Enneads* and classical Hellenism’.

In fact we are not so ignorant about the history of Greek philosophy, and especially of the Platonic schools, immediately before Plotinus, as Lacombe thinks. For this we should not look at the Work of Orientalists, but at that of Greek scholars. We shall com-

plete this critical review with a reference to two important recent contributions in this field. These two contributions refer to other literature on the subject.

C.J. de Vogel, *On the Neoplatonic character of Platonism and the Platonic character of Neoplatonism*, Mind 62 (1953), 43-64,

The author discusses her thesis, which is programmatically announced in the title, under three headings: (1) the direct predecessors of Plotinus; (2) the interpretation of later Platonism; (3) the intermediate stages. As a wealth of important information is given, we will record under each heading only a few points connected with topics discussed in this thesis.

(1) There are many precursors of the Plotinian doctrine of an ineffable divine principle below which there is a divine craftsman - the parallel of the Advaitic *nirguṇabrahman* and *Īśvara*. In the middle-Platonism of the first century there is a highest transcendent Deity and a Logos or mediator which occupies the intermediate place between this Deity and man, and which is called ‘second God’. Philo of Alexandria called the highest divine entity ‘the God’ and called the Logos ‘god’. Numenius called the first God an ‘inactive king’ and the second ‘craftsman (demiurge)’. In the *Corpus Hermeticum* the first place is occupied by a spirit (*nous*) which is God and Father; but there is a ‘second spirit’ which is ‘demiurge’. Apart from these different manifestations of the same idea, it can be said that Platonism was since the first century interpreted as teaching a hierarchy of being.

(2) If we pay attention to Aristotle's accounts of the doctrines of the last years of Plato's life, as has been done by L. Robin, W.D. Ross, and others, we have to conclude that Plato in his later years taught a system of philosophy which was marked by the doctrine of a hierarchy of being. The later dialogues also contain indications pointing in this direction. Especially the difficult dialogue *Parmenides* seems easily to give rise to a Neoplatonic interpretation.

(3) Between Plato and the Platonism of the first centuries Antiochus of Ascalon introduced the idea of a ‘philosophy of synthesis’ and at the same time a kind of traditionalism, which did not wish to break the authority of the ‘ancients’ but on the contrary to restore the ‘old doctrine’ by a synthesis of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoa.

Even in the Aristotelian Porch Posidonius of Apamea admitted Platonic elements into his doctrine. Lastly, in the early Academy itself, Speusippus and Xenocrates, adopting the Master's doctrine of first principles, taught a certain hierarchy of being.

In the light of these results it is clear, that anyone who claims that there are elements in Plotinus which are of Indian origin because they cannot be ‘easily explained on the basis of the pure philosophical tradition of Hellenism’, will have to investigate carefully and in great detail whether the so called ‘empty’ six centuries between Plato and Plotinus do not provide material showing how history bridged the gap between Platonism and Neoplatonism.

The same results follow from the materials dealt with in the following work.

P. Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*, The Hague 1953.

This stimulating book does not only provide much, partly new, material (the interpretation of which is partly discussed in a book review by A.H. Armstrong)[25] but constitutes itself an interesting philosophical study. The author shows in his introduction as also de Vogel does how history has almost always looked upon Platonism and Neoplatonism as having a very close connection or as being virtually identical. The differences were stressed since the XIXth century, but during the last decades there is again a tendency among scholars to bridge the gap.

We will mention three points dealt with in this book which are of special interest in the present context.

(1) The Neoplatonic idea of deriving the entire universe from the One is a natural development of the systems of Plato's pupils Speusippus and Xenocrates as well as (according to Aristotle), of Plato himself. ‘The most striking feature of this derivative system was the derivation of physicals, i.e. sensibles, from the anterior, non-sensible, unextended, timeless spheres’. An example is the way in which physical properties and even the atoms themselves were derived from mathematical entities.[26]

25 Mind 64 (1955), 273-274.
26 See 173, n. 1.

(2) One of the two main principles of Speusippus, as known from a newly discovered fragment, is above being and thus ‘strictly comparable to the One of Plotinus and other Neoplatonists’. ‘The particular originality of Speusippus seems to consist in his having described the second principle as above nonbeing’.[27]

(3) The meaning of the notion of ‘being as such’, ‘being qua being’ (*ón ȅi ón*) in Aristotle's Metaphysics has to be reinterpreted. In this interpretation, the subject matter of Aristotle's Metaphysics becomes *indeterminate* being, ‘which, because it is indeterminate, is unrestricted and therefore first and fully being’. It is therefore justified to speak about an *Aristoteles Neoplatonicus*, This indeterminate being leads again to the Neoplatonic One.[28]

Our general conclusion is that it will be the task of future research on the question of Indian influence on Neoplatonism to find aspects of Neoplatonism which cannot be understood against the background of the Greek tradition. In the light of recent research, however, where the six centuries between Plato and Plotinus are no longer neglected, it seems unlikely that such aspects can be found. If they will be nevertheless found and if they are derivable from ideas occurring in the Upaniṣads, it will, in the light of the research of Filliozat, be very likely that the Upaniṣads influenced Plotinus. Apart from this it remains very well possible that Plotinus knew something of Upaniṣadic doctrines and was aware of their similarity to his own ideas.

Another question, with which we have not occupied ourselves, is, whether Plotinus' Greek predecessors, and thus he himself indirectly, were influenced by any aspects of Indian thought. In the case of Plato this is at any rate very unlikely.[29] But in the case of the Pre-Socratics it is possible, though we can at present not say anything more definite about it.[30]

27 Cf. Schelling: 117.
28 Cf. above, III, 4: 194 and III, 3: 185.
29 Indian influence is never seriously defended. Cf. for Iranian and Egyptian influence Koster's book, quoted above 236, n. 3
30 Cf. G.P. Conger, Did India influence early Greek Philosophies? *Philosophy East and West*, 2 (1952), 102-128.

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UPANISHADS
Chāndogyopaniṣad.
Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad.
Aitareyopaniṣad.
Kauṣītakī Brāhmaṇopaniṣad.
Kaṭhopaniṣad.
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Māṇḍukyopaniṣad.
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Abbreviations

Abbreviations of the form III, 5: 199" refer to this book (i.e., Part III, section 5, page 199),
Abbreviations of the form ‘4.1.13’ refer to the *Brahmasūtra*-(*bhāṣya*) (i.e., 4th *adhyāya*, 1st pāda, 13th *sūtra*).
Abbreviations of the form ‘II 4.5.15’ refer to the *Enneads* (i.e., second *ennead*, 4th treatise, 5th chapter, 15th line (of the edition of Bréhier).)

Ait. Up.	*Aitareyopaniṣad*
BAU	*Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*
BG	*Bhagavad Gītā*
BS(B)	*Brahmasūtra*-(*bhāṣya*)
CU	*Chāndogyopaniṣad*
Enn.	*Enneads*
IU	*Īśopaniṣad*
Met.	*Metaphysica*
Muṇḍ. Up.	*Muṇḍakopaniṣad*
Parm.	*Parmenides*
Phaed.	*Phaedo*
Phaedr.	*Phaedrus*
Rep.	*Res Publica*

Tait. Up.	*Taittirīyopanṣad*
Tim.	*Timaeus*
Up.	*Upaniṣad*

Index of names

Errata

page	line	for	read
3	23	colloborate	collaborate
7	fn. 11	connadasons	connaissons
8	last line	therefore	therefor
12	fn. 17	lie	die
14	fn. 22	kanz	kann
19	17	shifting	sifting
42	fn. 54	trem	term
		morgenl'dndischen	morgenlāndischen
43	25	preceeded	preceded
50	fn. 85	selen	selon
54	fn. 100	*Weltanschaung*	*Weltanschauung*
56	fn. 109	account	accent
57	fn. 115	wholesomeness	wholeness

62	1	secreation	secration
64	21	AFTER: knowledge	INSERT that knowledge
66	14, 19, 24, 28	existants	existents
67	12	existants	existents
71	fn. 167	no	ne
73	fn. 174	or	er
77	16	reminder	remainder
85	22	existant	existent
99	16	things	thinks
103	19	nious	nous
105	fn. 332	commenting	commenting on
109	fn. 356	*dṛṣṭa*	*dṛṣṭi*
114	19	*āditya*	*ādityo*
115	5	character	charrioteer
116	3	two	the two
125	fn. 403	*prakṛt*	*prakṛti*

page	line	for	read
127	29	become	becomes
129	24	seem	seems
130	28	accidents	accidens
134	fn. 444	*mutantis*	*mutandis*
135	23	Pro	Pre
139	17	‘worldly’	a ‘worldly’
142	fn. 475	sin	ein
144	11	counsel	causal
145	23	substracts	subtracts
147	15	existant	existent
152	fn. 519	receptible	receptacle
165	26	metampsychosis	metempsychosis
167	fn. 24	Magic	Magie
168	3 from below	*prâxus*	*prâxis*
171	fn. 42	*amnia*	*omnia*
183	9	OMIT: which	
183	fn. 107	Schrif	Schrift
184	18	hypostasing	hypostatising
187	fn.	143	134
188	fn. 145	*aūtôn*	*taūtôn*
204	fn. 223	theologian	theologians
204	fn. 223	*Mushkāt*	*Mishkat*
206	2 from below	*quad*	*quid*
207	fn. 235	AFTER: *indischen*	INSERT: Boden
208	last line	forgotton	forgotten
209	19	exemption	exception
221	fn. 298	den	dem
236	18	1938	1928
252	11	Oesollshcaft	Oesellschaft
252	12	*jruhen*	*frühen*
254	33	Zeltschrift	Zeitschrift